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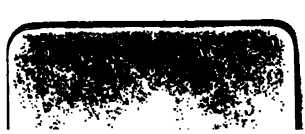

MESSIAH AS FORETOLD AND EXPECTED.

A COURSE OF SERMONS

ON THE

PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH,

AS INTERPRETED BY THE JEWS BEFORE
THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Preached before the University of Cambridge,

IN THE MONTHS OF FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1862.

BY

E. HAROLD BROWNE, B.D.

NORRISIAN PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,
AND CANON RESIDENTIARY OF EXETER CATHEDRAL.

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He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes are we healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all 82

SERMON I.

ISRAELITES WAITING FOR THE KINGDOM.

ACTS X. 42.

ERRATA.

Page 6, note. For "Onkelos adds" read "The Jerusalem Targum adds."

The passage cited in this note occurs in the Targum of Onkelos as given in the Complutensian, Antwerp and Paris Polyglotts; but it appears to have crept into the text in some manner from the Jerusalem Targum.

Page 49, l. 5. For "Talmud itself" read "Schemoth Rabba."

people there were, notwithstanding the unfavourable condition at that time both of the Roman and of the Jewish states. Let us imagine that we hear the Roman's enquiry first, and then picture to ourselves the answer of the Israelite. "Wherever I have gone," the former may be supposed to say, "I have found men of your nation. Nearly every city in Italy, in Egypt, and in Asia, swarms with them. In Alexandria, indeed, and its suburbs, they tell me, that not fewer than a million of the inhabitants are

Jews. Everywhere they are spoken against. Covetous, superstitious, factious, haters of the human race—these are the names by which I hear them called. Yet, I confess, that their steady adherence to the faith of their fathers, wherever they go, and howsoever they are persecuted, has moved my pity at least, if not my respect; and perhaps has somewhat roused my curiosity. Their resistance to Roman authority does truly appear like senseless fanaticism. We know that you profess to rely on certain ancient predictions uttered by the oracles of your God. Indeed throughout the East we hear accounts of a prophecy, that, at this present time, a great King shall rise up in Judæa, who shall deliver your nation from its oppressors, and shall reign over all the world. Nay! not the East only, but Italy too has been troubled with such sayings; insomuch that our late Emperor, Augustus, is reported to have destroyed 2000 books of divinations[1], wisely believing that these pretended prophecies incite light-minded and turbulent spirits to sedition and rebellion. But oracles have always been ambiguous and dangerous. We have read in ancient history, perhaps the account may have reached even to you, how Crœsus, king of Lydia, thought the oracle of Delphi spoke in his favour, and found to his cost, that it really spoke against him. In like manner Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, encouraged to believe that he could conquer the Romans, learned too late that the oracle

[1] Sueton. *Octav.* 31.

had signified that the Romans could conquer him. Most likely the Jewish oracles will be found of the like uncertainty, and a belief in them is only leading you onward to your ruin. Nevertheless, thinking that there are some wise men among you, and having learned that doctrines of deep import are taught in your mysteries, I should willingly listen, if you would tell me, on what grounds it is, that you found your hope of deliverance, and so often stubbornly resist our irresistible power."

Thus much the Roman: let us now listen to the Jew's reply. "I do not wonder, that one bred in heathen Italy should despise our race and our faith. It was for our sins and our fathers' sins that we are what you see us now. Holy men of old were moved of God to forewarn us, that, unless we kept His laws, He would give up our land to the heathen, and scatter us abroad among the nations. And much I fear, that those of our people, who are now mingled among the Gentiles, have learned their ways, and have brought reproach upon Israel. But you ask me to give a reason for the belief, which is now amongst us, the belief that a great Deliverer will speedily arrive, that He will restore the Kingdom to Israel, and make Jerusalem the head of the nations, the joy of the whole earth. Listen then, and I will tell you truly, according to the light that is in me.

"The people of Israel are not like the nations of this world. For now nearly 2000 years they have

lived alone and apart. Two thousand years ago God, the one only God who made all things, called our father Abraham, taught him the true worship, and separated his posterity from all the people upon earth. He only and his race were chosen to be depositaries of the truth and of the light from Heaven. To him the God whom he worshipped promised, that his seed should endure for ever, and that in his race should all the nations of the earth be blessed. Never yet has that promise failed. Abraham was then almost a solitary wanderer, childless, and to all human foresight hopeless of offspring. But in his old age a son was born to him, from that son was born another and another; from the elder sprang the people of Idumæa, from the younger came the twelve tribes of Israel. Great has been at one time the prosperity; great have been at other times the troubles of our race. But ever in the darkest night there has sprung up for us a light from Heaven. The heathen have borne rule over us; but we have broken their bonds asunder. The king of Babylon led us captive, but God raised up Cyrus, king of Persia, to deliver us: the Greek kings of Syria oppressed and persecuted us, defiled our temple and forbade our worship; but from our own priestly race there arose a Matthias and a Judas, and a Simon, and they once more restored a kingdom to Judah, and placed native princes upon the throne of Israel. And we believe that He, who so watched over the children of Abraham, will not let

His promise fail. Even though now a power greater than Babylon, or Persia, or Greece, has overshadowed us; we have strong ground to hope and to believe that that very shadow is but the darkest hour before the daystar shall arise. Do not think our oracles like those of which we have read in heathen lands, like the brazen kettles of Dodona, or the steam that issues from the fissure at Delphi, or the oracle of the ram-god in the deserts of Libya. We possess a treasured collection of sacred volumes, guarded with pious care for ages and generations. The latest of them all dates back well nigh five centuries; the more ancient were written, as we cannot doubt, more than thrice that time ago. These books record the history of this people, and of their forefathers; they contain the laws given to us by God Himself; and therewith are bound up predictions and promises given to our fathers generation after generation. So sacred do we hold them, that they are always kept in the most holy place of the Temple of Jerusalem; and with the utmost care and fidelity copies are multiplied for the use of private worshippers, and for reading in our public assemblies. The language, in which these books are written, is not the language which you now hear spoken among our people. The ancient Jewish speech was that in which God spake to Abraham and to Moses; but, when our fathers had lived for seventy years as captives in Babylon, and when afterwards the kings of Syria bore rule over us, we lost the tongue of Zion, and can now

only speak the stammering tongue of our conquerors. Still, our sacred writings are read in our religious assemblies, first in the ancient Hebrew, as we have them handed down to us, and then in a modern version in the Chaldee or the language of Aram. A few only of our Scribes and Rabbins understand them in Hebrew; but we can all study and pray over them in the language which we have learned in our fathers' homes. That you may know then on what we ground our hopes, I will, if you will be patient with me, recite some few of the ancient prophecies, which we find interwoven with our national history, and which are set down for us in the writings of our prophets. I must take them from our authorized translations; for alas! I myself know them but very imperfectly in their primitive Hebrew.

"To begin from very ancient days, Jacob, the father of our race, is recorded by Moses, our great lawgiver, to have said, when he was dying—I quote his words, as we have them read to us in Chaldee in the synagogues—he was blessing his son Judah, and he said: 'There shall be dominion in the beginning, and in the end a king shall be magnified (or anointed, יִתְרַבֵּי) from the house of Judah...There shall not depart a ruler from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children for ever, even till Messiah cometh, whose is the kingdom, and whom the people shall obey. I wait for thy salvation, O Lord[1].'

[1] *Targum* of Onkelos on Gen. xlix. 9, 10, 18. Onkelos adds

"When our people were coming out of Egypt to take possession of the land, in which we live, a wicked prophet was suborned by the King of Moab to curse and to defy them; but God, the God of our fathers, forbade him to speak evil against them, and put into his mouth a prediction of blessing. These were some of the words he spoke: 'I behold him, but not now; I see him, but not near. A King shall rise out of Jacob, and a Messiah shall be magnified out of Israel, who shall destroy the princes of Moab, and shall bear dominion over all the children of men[1].'

"And, as thus at the very birth of our nation promises were given of its future greatness, and assurances that a King should rise out of it to rule over all men; so, as our history went on, when we sinned against God and when we were punished for our sins, there rose up prophet after prophet, some forewarning us of danger, and others encouraging us with promises of deliverance, but all, with one consent, pointing our hopes forward to the birth of our great King, and to the blessing which He should bring upon us.

"His very birthplace is told us by one prophet:

here by way of comment; "Our father Jacob meant, I wait not for a temporal salvation such as that of Gideon, nor for a transitory deliverance like that of Samson; but I wait for the redemption of Messiah the Son of David, who shall come to bring to himself the children of Israel. His redemption my soul waiteth for."

[1] *Targum* of Onkelos on Num. xxiv. 17.

'And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art thou little to be numbered among the thousands of Judah? From thee shall come forth to me Messiah to exercise dominion in Israel, whose name is spoken of from the beginning, from the days of eternity[1].'

"As Bethlehem is to be His birthplace, so He is to be of the house of our great king, David the son of Jesse, whose city Bethlehem was. One prophet says: 'A King shall come from the sons of Jesse, and a Messiah shall be anointed from his children's children[2].' And another prophet: 'I will raise up to David a righteous Messiah, and a King shall reign and prosper[3].' And again another writes: 'They shall obey Messiah, the Son of David, their King[4].'

"How great this King shall be, we know not, we cannot foresee. Every name of glory and of greatness is bestowed upon him. Some think the sayings are not to be expounded too strictly, for fear of blasphemy against the King of heaven. I will not dare to determine how we must construe them; but I know that on no other created being has such honour been conferred as on this Prince, for whom all Israel is looking up. In one of our ancient hymns, which all men acknowledge to be sung of the Messiah, the Most High Himself says to Him,

[1] *Targum* of Jonathan on Micah v. 1.
[2] Jonathan on Isai. xi. 1.
[3] Jonathan on Jer. xxiii. 5. and xxxiii. 15.
[4] Jonathan on Hosea iii. 5.

'Thou art My Son, this day I have begotten Thee[1].' And in one prediction of His birth we read: 'Thus saith the prophet to the house of David, Lo, unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. He shall take the Law upon Him, and His name is called by Him that is Wonderful, Counsel, mighty God, abiding for ever, Messiah. In His days great peace shall be upon us[2].' And what strikes a Jewish ear as so strange in this saying is, that to Messiah is given that name, *Mighty God*, and *abiding for ever*, which name is given in our sacred Scriptures but to the one awful Being, whom we worship, even the Holy One, blessed be He[3]. And yet I will confess to you, that much as thoughtful men among us are perplexed by this excess of the glory, there are some few sayings concerning Messiah which perplex us even more, as they seem to point to His suffering. One passage of our great prophet Isaiah begins with the joyful words, 'Behold, my servant Messiah shall prosper[4];' but, as

[1] Ps. ii. The Zohar, the Talmud, and other ancient Jewish authorities refer this Psalm to Messiah. Even the modern Jews admit, that it was so interpreted by their forefathers. Kimchi says this is true, though he declines to follow in their steps; and Jarchi gives, as his reason for not following them, that it is better to take another interpretation "in order to refute the heretics," i. e. the Christians. Some editions of Jarchi have omitted these words, but Pococke, *Not. Miscell. ad Portam Mosis*, Cap. VIII. *Works*, Vol. I. p. 239, Lond. 1740, has restored them from manuscript authority.

[2] Jonathan on Isai. ix. 6,

[3] הקב"ה.

[4] Jonathan on Isai. lii. 13.

we read on a little further, we find it said, that, 'Because of Israel's sins, He shall be stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, wounded for our transgression, bruised for our iniquities; nay, cut off out of the land of the living; making His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death.' And in one other prophet it is written in like manner: 'Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself[1].' We cannot reconcile this with all that is said of His glory, of His greatness, of His kingdom that shall last for ever. Nay, where we read of his sufferings, we read directly after of His triumph and His glory and His victory. It is even said, that His pouring out His soul unto death should be the very cause why He should divide a portion with the great and divide the spoil with the strong; why He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. We think, therefore, but we know not how, that though He must have a terrible struggle and go through fearful sufferings, they will be but struggles for victory and sufferings leading to glory and dominion and power and honour. For we are assured, and that repeatedly, that 'His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed[2].' And so happy shall that kingdom be, that the prophet Isaiah again has told us: 'In the days of the Messiah of Israel peace shall be multiplied on earth; the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the

[1] Dan. ix. 26. [2] Dan. vii. 14.

calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them[1].' And you may understand why Israelites do not fear even the power of Rome, when they expect such great deliverance from it. We believe that we, like our King, may have much to go through, and that we may suffer fearfully; but Jews have never been cowards, and we can hope even against hope.

"But you will ask me again, Why we expect all this so soon to come to pass? why the Messiah should come to help us now, when he came not to rescue us from Egypt or from Babylon or from the frantic fury of Antiochus the Magnificent, more truly called Antiochus the maniac[2]. I will tell you. Already I have mentioned the dying words of our father Jacob, how he said, that Judah should never lack kings or scribes till the Messiah should come, whom all people should obey. Now we see signs all around us, that kings are failing to the house of Judah. Whilst Herod and Archelaus his son reigned over us, we had left us at least a shadow of Jewish royalty; and, little as we loved the Idumæan race, we rejoiced to think that by Herod's marriage with Mariamne there was still the blood of our Asmonean princes flowing in the royal house. But now even the mighty Herod's offspring seems fading away. Some indeed are like

[1] Jonathan on Isai. xi. 6.

[2] Antiochus Epiphanes, called in reproach Antiochus Epimanes.

puppet kings in the neighbouring tetrarchies; but the land of Judah has fallen under the iron rule of the Roman Procurator; and we know that Rome, when she grasps, grasps firmly. So then the very darkness of our destiny makes us look forward to the light. God's promises and God's threatenings have never failed us yet: why should they fail us now? Many other prophecies point to the present, as the time when we may look for the Messiah: but I will not weary you with them all. Two more only will I recount to you, and then I shall have done. When our people were in Babylon nearly 600 years ago, God raised up among them a notable prophet, who prophesied even in the great king's court. He prophesied too, not like the rest, in the ancient tongue of the Hebrews, but in the tongue of the Chaldeans, among whom he was dwelling, a dialect very near to that which now is spoken amongst ourselves in our native land of Israel. We can therefore read his words for ourselves, and for them need no interpreter. There are those among our rabbis, who speak of him as almost the greatest of all the prophets, for he not only foretold the future king, but he has marked the very time at which that king shall come[1]. Twice he had a vision of

[1] The modern Jews would even exclude Daniel from the "goodly fellowship of the prophets." But all their more ancient writers appeal to his predictions of the Messiah. The testimony of Josephus is plain, that in his time Daniel was esteemed as a

four great empires, empires ruling over the world, and to which the Jews should be subject. The first empire was that of Babylon; he saw it as a head of gold in one vision, as a lion with eagles' wings in the other. The second was that of Medo-Persia, the breast and arms of silver was one type of it; in the other vision, a bear with one side more raised than the other foreshowed the ascendance of Persia over Media. The third was the Greek or Macedonian power, like the belly and thighs of brass; and in the other vision, like a leopard, with four wings, which typified the four kingdoms, which rose among the successors of Alexander. And there was a fourth empire, diverse from all the rest; like iron, though mixed with clay; like a beast, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, and with great iron teeth devouring, stamping and breaking in pieces. Need I tell you what empire the prophet saw so forepictured to him? But what concerns us most is this, that in both these visions, after the fourth

peculiarly great prophet, and that because he marked not only the event, but the time also. Ἄξιον καὶ τἀνδρὸς τούτου καὶ ὃ μάλιστα θαυμάσαιτό τις ἂν ἀκούσας διελθεῖν. Ἅπαντα γὰρ αὐτῷ παραδόξως ὡς ἑνί τινι τῶν μεγίστων εὐτυχήθη προφητῶν, καὶ παρὰ τὸν τῆς ζωῆς χρόνον τιμή τε καὶ δόξα παρὰ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ τοῦ πλήθους, καὶ τελευτήσας δὲ μνήμην αἰώνιον ἔχει. Τὰ γὰρ βίβλια, ὅσα δὴ συγγραψάμενος καταλέλοιπεν, ἀναγινώσκεται παρ' ἡμῖν ἔτι καὶ νῦν· καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν ἐξ αὐτῶν, ὅτι Δανιῆλος ὡμίλει τῷ Θεῷ. Οὐ γὰρ τὰ μέλλοντα μόνον προφητεύων διετέλει, καθάπερ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι προφῆται, ἀλλὰ καὶ καιρὸν ὥριζεν, εἰς ὃν ταῦτα ἀποβήσεται.—Joseph. *A. J.* x. 11.

empire had arisen, and whilst it was devouring and destroying, Daniel saw another kingdom rise silently and unobserved. It was like a stone hewn without hands, but it grew up into a mountain. It brake in pieces the iron empire and destroyed it; and then itself filled the whole earth. Or, as the other vision imaged it, one like the Son of man came in the clouds of heaven, and was brought before the throne of the Ancient of Days, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that shall not be destroyed. And so once more we say, that now, when the fourth tyranny is wearing us down, we may well expect, that He who cometh with clouds (such is one of our names of Messiah)[1] shall take the kingdom and reign with the saints of the Most High for ever.

"And yet one more note of time was given from heaven to the same prophet, Daniel: for, when the temple had been destroyed and the city was desolate, it was told him, that, counting from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, when street and wall should be built, even in times of straitness, *unto Messiah the Prince,* should be sixty-nine hebdo-

[1] *Anani* is a name by which the Messiah is called in several rabbinical writings, because it is said in Dan. vii. 13, that 'one like the Son of man came "with the clouds of Heaven"' *im anani Shemaiah* עִם עֲנָנֵי שְׁמַיָּא.

mades. 'Seventy hebdomades were determined to finish the transgression and to make an end of sin and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision, and to anoint the most holy[1].' Now in our Jewish reckoning we have hebdomades or weeks of years, as well as hebdomades or weeks of days: every seventh year is with us a sabbath year, as every seventh day is a sabbath day; and as the prophecy could not have been meant weeks of days, we believe it must have meant weeks or hebdomades of years. And from whatever point we can reasonably reckon the prophecy to be dated; the end of the seventy weeks must be drawing very near. Seven times seventy, four hundred and ninety years, are more than past since the first returns from captivity under Cyrus and Darius. Their close cannot be far off, if we date them even from that time when Artaxerxes gave leave to Nehemiah to build the city and the wall.

"Thus have I told you, why we hope for deliverance, why we believe that a great King shall be born, perhaps even now already He is born, though we know not where, nor when; why we expect Him to free us from slavery and to make our people victorious over their enemies; why we doubt not that His coming is even now quite close at hand. It is a happy, and yet it is a sad thought for us. For we know that His coming shall sift us like wheat. We

[1] Dan. ix. 24, 25.

are told, that He shall suddenly come to His temple; but who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. (Mal. iii. 2.) We read, that the proud and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble; the day that cometh shall burn them up. But to them that fear the name of our God, the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings. (Mal. iv. 2.) Everywhere we find the same strange mixture of threatenings with promises, of mercy and of judgment. But, in the end, and rising brightly above all, we see unchangingly that Messiah's kingdom shall be glorified, and that all nations shall bow down before Him."

I have ventured to put into the mouth of an ancient Jew an account of prophecies, which are familiar as household words to all of us. In so doing I have had recourse to none but the most ancient of all existing Jewish interpretations of the sacred books of the Old Testament. There can be no reasonable doubt in any well-informed and candid mind, that the Jews, at the period which I have imagined, did interpret the prophecies, as I have supposed my Jewish speaker to have quoted them. The translations, to which I have referred, are those of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, and of Jonathan on the prophets. The traditional opinions which I have mentioned, not founded on these

translations, are derived only from Josephus. It has been the general belief of scholars, that Onkelos and Jonathan were contemporaries of our blessed Lord, or rather before Him in age. The Jews give them a far more remote antiquity, and ascribe to them a miraculous inspiration, an infallible authority[1]. No sufficient reasons have ever been alleged for doubting their very early date. Their language, corresponding most closely with the Chaldee of Daniel and Ezra, and very unlike the Chaldee of the later Targums and of the Babylonian Talmud, is an unanswerable argument, as proving that they lived and wrote as early as the time which is commonly assigned to them[2]. If, however, it were really doubtful, whether their date was so early as this, it is so certain that they are wholly Jewish and utterly unconnected with all Christian influence, that they would, in any case, fully and exclusively exhibit the

[1] See Leusden, *Philologus Hebræo-mixtus*, Diss. v; also Schœtgen: *Præf.* § 17. The Talmudic tract, *Megilla*, cap. I. fol. 3, says, on the authority of R. Jeremiah and of R. Chija, that Onkelos, a proselyte, composed his Targum on the Pentateuch from the mouth of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, and that Jonathan Ben Uzziel composed the Targum on the Prophets from the mouth of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

[2] The only argument of any weight against their antiquity is that they are not referred to by Origen or Jerome. But although Origen and Jerome and Theodoret were, unlike the other fathers, acquainted with Hebrew, their knowledge of Chaldee, Syriac, and Jewish literature in general, was so limited, that their silence can be no sufficient ground for denying the existence of particular Jewish documents in their days.

traditional Jewish interpretations of the sacred books of the Old Testament.

It would be easy to multiply passages on which the Jews founded their hopes of deliverance, especially if we should have recourse to the later rabbinical writings for authority. And this too would not be likely to mislead us: for between even the latest of their writings and the Christian Church there can have been no collusion or conspiracy. On the contrary, the constant endeavour of all the later Jews has been to explain away the Messianic prophecies and assign a temporal meaning to them; even when they are constrained to acknowledge, that the more ancient interpretation always had pointed to the coming of the Christ. Their tendency, therefore, has been always to lessen, not to increase, the number of these predictions; because they know that Christians claim them as their own.

I need hardly tell you, that my reason for putting this subject before you in the form of a statement by an ancient Jew is this. We, bred up as we are in the Christian Church, reading and hearing from our childhood the traditionary Christian exposition of the prophecies, may not unnaturally feel a misgiving and apprehension, that perhaps we are biassed by early prejudice. We doubt whether the predictions of the Old Testament have not had a sense imposed upon them to square and fit them to the Christian history. We know, indeed, that the Old Testament

cannot of itself be a Christian forgery; for the greatest opponents, the bitterest enemies of Christ have from the first had its custody and guardianship. But, though the books themselves may be genuine, the sense assigned to them may be Christian and novel. What was meant for Hezekiah or Zorobabel may have been twisted and adapted, till it has seemed a prophecy of Christ.

But if it is certain that the Old Testament is a Jewish and not a Christian record, it is quite as certain that the Messianic interpretation of the Old Testament is Jewish too. It is as certain as any single fact in ancient history, that the Jews in the first century of the Christian era, *i. e.* during the lifetime and soon after the death of the Lord Jesus, were expecting the Messiah immediately to appear; and that they founded their expectations on the prophecies to which I have referred, and which their current translations and paraphrases rendered as I have quoted them.

We are most of us well acquainted with the statements of Josephus, of Tacitus, and of Suetonius, that, at the time of the last siege of Jerusalem, the Jews were encouraged to the war by prophecies that some one should rise in their own country, who should obtain the empire of the world[1]. Suetonius

[1] Joseph, *B. J.* VI. 5. n. 4. Τὸ δὲ ἐπάραν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἦν χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος, ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὑρημένος γράμμασιν, ὡς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας τὶς αὐτῶν ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης. Τοῦτο οἱ μὲν ὡς οἰκεῖον ἐξέλαβον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν

speaks of the tradition as ancient and constant, and prevailing throughout the East. Tacitus says it was contained in the books of the priests, *i.e.* of which the priests had the custody. Though Josephus calls it "a doubtful oracle," yet he says it was "contained in the sacred writings." All agree that the time was come in which their King was expected. "*At that time*," says Josephus; "*at that time*," says Suetonius; "*at that very time*," says Tacitus; as though there were a nervous anxiety lest the time was almost passing away. Josephus, indeed, a renegade and rationalist Jew, and a servile courtier of Vespasian's, set the example, which the two Latin historians followed, of applying the so-called ambiguous prophecy to the great Roman general, whose successes in Judæa led to his becoming Emperor of Rome, and so of all the world. But, how ready soever modern rationalists have been to follow the unbelieving and rationalizing Jews, I believe none has yet been found who has rendered *Shiloh* by *Vespa-*

σοφῶν ἐπλανήθησαν περὶ τὴν κρίσιν· ἐδήλου δ' ἄρα περὶ τὴν Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν, ἀποδειχθέντος ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αὐτοκράτορος. Tacit. *Hist.* v. 13: Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Quæ ambages Vespasianum ac Titum prædixerant. Sed vulgus, more humanæ cupidinis, sibi tantam fatorum magnitudinem interpretati, ne adversis quidem ad vera mutabantur. Sueton. *Vesp.* 4: Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de imperatore Romano, quantum eventu postea patuit, prædictum Judæi ad se trahentes rebellarunt.

sian, or has considered the Roman Emperor to be the Messiah of the visions of Daniel[1].

And so the fact remains undoubted and unquestionable that, relying on the words of their prophets, and translating those words as we have them translated in the Chaldee paraphrases, the Jews at the time of Christ were in instant and anxious and confident expectation that Messiah should come, should redeem and restore Israel, and should spread His Kingdom through the world.

It would be easy to suppose the heathen and the Jew, whose dialogue we have listened to, living for a few years longer in Jerusalem, and present in some of the crowds, which gathered round Jesus of Nazareth, as He spoke His words of power and goodness. They may have even witnessed His crucifixion, and have heard rumours that He had risen from the grave. We must not say that they saw His miracles; for then we should assume that they had another evidence besides the evidence of prophecy, to which alone I would ask your thoughts to-day. If they had watched Him, when He was brought before the High-priest and the Governor, they would have

[1] How ill the ancient predictions could have applied to Vespasian may be seen from the short reign of himself and his son Titus, the unhappy reign of Domitian, and the speedy extinction of the Flavian family. It has been remarked that Flavia Domitilla, the granddaughter of Vespasian, Titus Flavius Clemens, his nephew, Plautilla, his niece, and another Flavia Domitilla of the same family, actually became Christians, and suffered for their faith.

heard them acknowledge, that He was indeed a King, but that His Kingdom was not of this world. If they had still felt an interest in what He taught, and had listened in after years to the teaching of His followers, they would have had it pressed upon their minds that the Jewish Scriptures contained the clearest records of the sufferings, of the death, and of the burial of the King Messiah; they would have been told that "Moses and the prophets did say that Messiah should suffer, and should rise from the dead;" that "He was to be led like a sheep to the slaughter, and that on Him should be laid the iniquity of us all." They would have heard those words of Jesus dwelt upon, in which He declared His Kingdom not of this world, and the Old Testament language expounded as signifying a reign in the hearts and lives of men, not with the pomp and state of an Eastern potentate or an earthly conqueror. They would be told that it was true the promises were made to Israel, but that it was to believing, not to unbelieving, Israel; that those Israelites, who accepted their great Deliverer, should indeed be heirs of all the blessings to Abraham; but that those, who chose a temporal before a spiritual inheritance, would find that there were judgments denounced on them in the Old Testament, and that these judgments were not now far off.

There is nothing improbable in the further supposition that both the Jew and the Gentile may have been present at, and even personally engaged

in, the terrible war, which ended in the desolation of Jerusalem. The temple, to which was to have come suddenly the Lord, the Angel of the Covenant, was left without even one stone upon another. Pretended prophets and pretended Christs had arisen, but they had not arrested the arms of Titus, nor made Jerusalem the head of the whole earth. That city, that "famous city," as one Roman historian calls it[1]; Jerusalem, "by far the most illustrious of all the cities, not of Judæa only, but of all the East," as it is called by another[2], had utterly sunk into heaps of ashes. Horrors, untold before even in Eastern history, had fallen upon the devoted nation. It was said, that a few followers of the crucified Teacher of Nazareth had escaped from the siege and taken shelter in Pella; but of the 600,000 who continued to defend the city to the last, famine, and pestilence, and murder, and sedition among themselves, the Roman sword, the Roman fire, and the Roman cross, left scarce enough behind to follow in slavery the victor's triumph to Rome.

If still the Jew and the Roman, who had talked together of the Hebrew oracles, survived to see the end, we cannot well conjecture how the sight may have moved them. Was the Jew utterly hopeless? Was the Roman satisfied that Judaism was but a contemptible superstition, and Jewish prophecies like other ambiguous oracles?

[1] Tacit. *H.* v. 2.
[2] Plin. *H. N.* v. 14.

I cannot say, that, if they had never seen the miracles, which Christ's followers say that He wrought, that, if they had never been steadily under Christian teaching, and led by it to the belief that the Old Testament prophecies pointed to a kingdom not of this world, they would have been convinced, even by the destruction of the Holy City, and by the knowledge that all around, in Judæa, and Asia, and Greece, and Italy, there was growing up a small Jewish sect, small at first, but steadily advancing—a Jewish sect, which claimed Jesus as the Messiah, and for the sake of that Messiah braved every torture and cruelty which popular and imperial savageness could devise to extirpate them. I fully admit that, at this early period of Christian history, there needed something besides the fulfilment of prophecy to satisfy, at least, a casual observer that Jesus was the Christ. There needed miracles, I doubt not, or miracles would not have been given; there needed the special teaching of the Spirit of God; there needed to enter into the deep, the heart-searching and yet heart-soothing doctrines of Christianity, and to feel their secret influence on the soul; or the prophecies might have seemed to fail of, rather than to attain, their accomplishment. Outwardly, at least, the kingdom had not been given to Israel; outwardly, Jesus had not taken the crown, but rather had sunk beneath the cross.

But we, my brethren, have lived to other days,

and have seen other sights. We, I say, have an evidence from prophecy, which the ancient Roman and the ancient Jew could not have had. Equally with them we can see how those predictions, which speak of suffering and death and burial, met in Jesus the crucified. Equally, or more clearly, we can see that the warnings, which ever accompanied the promises to Israel, fell upon Jerusalem and on the hardened Jews. But we too have heard with our ears, yea! and seen with our eyes what they could not see, the setting up of the kingdom of Messiah.

In those days of the Emperor Tiberius, when I first asked you to go with me in thought to Judæa and Jerusalem, the Roman ruled over the world, or all that he knew of the world. Look round upon the map, and see the different tribes of Greeks, and Italians, of Thracians, and Gauls, and Britons, and Germans, of the inhabitants of Asia Minor and Egypt and Africa, and say what it was that reigned in and over them all. The Romans reigned over them bodily, and error and ignorance reigned in them spiritually. Look onward some three or four centuries, and the stone, which no hands had hewn in the land of Israel, had grown silently into a mountain and had filled the Roman world. The grain of mustard-seed, which Jesus had planted, and which had been watered by His Blood, was a great tree, and the birds of heaven sheltered under it. The imperial metropoles of Rome and Constantinople, the almost equally great cities of Antioch and Alex-

andria, are then scarcely so much known to us, because they were seats of empire or of commerce, as because they were centres of Christianity and of the Church of Christ. Egypt could count its bishops by hundreds. Africa and Asia and Greece and Italy and Gaul and Spain and Britain, many of them but half subject to the Emperor, had become subjects of the Saviour. Even the fierce tribes of Germany, which Rome had never conquered, bent their heads to the great "King of the Jews." The Roman eagles had been supplanted by the symbol of the Crucified; and the crown itself bore the cross upon its summit. Nay, when we take this view of it; the fulfilment of prophecy, so far from not being sufficiently literal, almost perplexes us because it seems too literal. So great was the professed and outward subjection of the Roman world to Christ, that it seemed rather to correspond with Jewish and carnal expositions of prophecy than with the Christian teaching, "My kingdom is not of this world."

And, I say, we have not only heard it with the hearing of the ear, and read it in the records of history; we see it before our eyes. Why is it, that we all are here this day in this place, but because we all with one consent profess that we are subjects of Messiah the Prince? If, when Jerusalem was standing and the temple was yet upon Mount Zion, there was any habitation of man here in this city, there could but have been a race of British barba-

rians, surrounded by fens and morasses, and in a far more miserable morass of ignorance and error. It is our subjection to the King of Israel, which has brought us all the comforts of civilization, as well as all the hopes of Christianity. And, whether we be faithful subjects, or whether we be rebellious subjects, we are the subjects of Christ, and have taken our part in the fulfilment of prophecy.

I have not time to-day to enter more fully into particular predictions (I must reserve that for the future), nor to explain some difficulties. One difficulty, it may be, is patent and on the face of it, and has become more formidable with our growing knowledge and experience. It is this. Three or four centuries after Christ, Christianity had indeed made rapid progress, and had taken possession of the Roman world in the name of its King. Since that time it has seemed almost to be stationary. Nay! when Mohammed rose, he not only checked the course, but actually drove back the tide. And though, since that time, great tracts of country, like Russia and America, have been added to Christendom; yet modern discovery has made known to us hundreds of millions of human beings, to whom no knowledge of the Saviour can have ever come. We cannot deny the difficulty; yet surely it is rather apparent than real. The prophecy of Daniel declared that, in the time of the fourth great Empire, a Kingdom should gradually arise, which should first supplant the heathen Empire of Rome,

and in the end should fill the earth. The first part of the prediction was abundantly verified in the early ages of Christianity. There has been nothing as yet to disprove the rest. Nothing surely in the Church's later history is so apparently adverse to the natural sense of this prophecy, as were, at the time, the death of Christ, and the destruction of Jerusalem. Those events, we now can see, were really necessary to the completion of the scheme of Providence and Grace. After all, it is but a short period in a world's history, during which the course of the Gospel had become stationary, instead of progressive. And during this comparatively short period, though there may have been partial darkness, when there might have been expected only light; yet can we not see, that God may have been preparing and training and schooling His Church, in order to fit it more effectually to convert the world? It may have been even a mercy to China and Japan and India, that Christianity stagnated instead of flowing onward, when the errors of Romanism had corrupted its fountains. And there is surely nothing in what we see around us, which should lead us to doubt or to deny, that the stone, which has without controversy become a mountain, shall one day fill, not only the Roman Empire, but even the whole world.

It is my hope in my future Sermons to consider more in detail some of the prophetic teaching, as it concerns Jesus Christ. I have not left myself time

to-day to speak of its deep practical bearing on the heart and on the life of man. I will only, till we meet again, commend it to your thoughts and to your devotions; praying you to remember that herein, i. e. in the truth of a predestinated, presignified, and in due time manifested Saviour, is knit up all that we can believe, all that we should fear, all that we can hope, as to our inmost being and our life in God. If it be but a nobler form of ancient superstition; then it may be that we have only developed into manhood, and that there is a future for the species but none for the single soul. Then might we be indeed a world without a God; orphans without a Father or a home. But if it be God's truth, and man's truest heritage; then have we an endless hereafter, a judgment waiting for us, a hope based on an unchanging foundation, a Father ever watching over us and loving us, and a home— "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

SERMON II.

THE FORERUNNER AND THE JUDGMENT.

MALACHI III. 1, 2.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming?

IN my Sermon last Sunday I endeavoured to sketch out the state of expectation prevalent among pious and intelligent Jews at the time of Christ's coming, and to shew on what basis that expectation was grounded. There can be no question or doubt, that at that period the hope of Messiah was strong and universal. The Targums, some of which were composed at that very date, the witness of Josephus, who was also contemporary, the witness of heathen writers, prove it as incontestably as anything in ancient history can possibly be proved. The testimony of later Jews, the current of tradition running through the whole life of Judaism, unmistakeably confirms the contemporary

records. The later Targums, the Talmuds, the Kabbala, the Jewish commentaries, the controversies between early Christians and Jews, all bear record to the universal Jewish belief, that King Messiah was looked for at the time when Jesus Christ appeared. We may fairly add to these witnesses the witness of the New Testament. It was undoubtedly written in the first century. It was undoubtedly written by men who had been Jews. It unhesitatingly appeals to Jews, converted or unconverted, claiming their own Scriptures, and their own interpretation of their Scriptures, as pointing to the coming of a great King at the time when Jesus Christ came into the world.

There are, therefore, two great facts. One, that the whole Jewish nation, taught by the writings of their prophets, were in the first Christian century in full, earnest, longing hope of a redemption by a great expected Deliverer. The other, that at that very time Jesus Christ lived, taught and died—that He produced an unheard-of influence on Jews and on the world—that, soon after His death, His religion spread far and wide, that it has never yet ceased to spread farther and wider; and that the Jews, who rejected Him, their city, their temple, their worship, their very national existence, were utterly destroyed and wiped out from the face of the earth.

Now, let us suppose a case in modern history in some degree like this. Suppose it to have been

the general belief in the middle of the eighteenth century in France, and spreading from France through civilized Europe; a belief, such as to make the thought enter largely into, and occupy a prominent place in, all religious literature—a belief professedly grounded on books universally believed by Christians to be records of a Divine revelation, given in early times to the Church—a belief, that at the end of the eighteenth century the ancient monarchy of France should be abolished, the whole framework of society rent asunder, altar as well as throne destroyed, the civilized world convulsed to its centre, the king beheaded, the religion of Christ supplanted by the worship of reason; that from the chaos should rise up the greatest of European conquerors, who should establish on the ruins of the old kingdom a mighty empire, which, notwithstanding the dethronement and death of its founder, should be handed on in his family. I cannot conceive, that we, in our day, knowing the predictions, seeing them, according to the hypothesis, imbedded in the religious literature of France and Europe, and looking on the events themselves, should be able to say, that there was nothing supernatural or superhuman in the wisdom which uttered or which inspired the prophecy, to which the history so aptly fitted in. I believe that the veriest sceptic amongst us would be sorely puzzled in his scepticism.

But the case I have supposed is no whit stronger

than, nay! it is in no possible degree as strong as, the case of the Jewish prophecies and the Jewish expectations, when compared with the Christian history. It is not so strong a case for many reasons. In the first place, such a prediction as I have supposed would tend not unnaturally to its own fulfilment. The popular expectation of a great revolution would keep the national mind in a ferment, and readily lead to the revolution expected. In the midst of revolutionary anarchy strong spirits often rise to the surface; and military despotisms are the proverbial consequence. It would want but few favouring conditions to bring about all that would thus have been looked forward to.

In the next place, such a prediction would have nothing in it that was religious: it would form no part of the great spiritual history of the world; it would look therefore like a piece of vulgar soothsaying or fortune-telling, not like the unfolding of God's great purposes to man.

In both these respects the Jewish prophecies and their Christian fulfilment stand alone. Nothing ever happened like them: nothing can be imagined equal to them.

Of course, it is not to be denied, that the existence of the prophecies, and the popular reliance on them, would lead to their attempted fulfilment. We read of false prophets and popular demagogues in no small number rising during the whole of the first Christian century. We read of Theudas and Judas

and Barchochba and the false prophets at the siege of Jerusalem; Herod and Vespasian were both pointed out by their flatterers as the Great King from the East; the Jewish rebellion itself drew all its vigour and obstinacy from the fanatical belief and unbroken hope, that God would at that time make Judæa the head of the world. These are just the modes in which the sayings of the Soothsayer are made to issue in what seems their accomplishment. But it is utterly impossible to apply this to Christ. No one ever took a more unlikely way of conquering a world than did Jesus of Nazareth. Any man of great intelligence and enterprise can guide the current of human thought, if he will but in some degree swim with it. An Erasmus, a Luther, a Loyola, and many a man of less power than any of them, has created great effects by taking at the flood that tide which is often in the thoughts of men. But Jesus of Nazareth did what was all unlike to this. In a remote province of the Roman empire, living the life of a simple teacher of truth, opposing all the most cherished prejudices of His countrymen, and indeed of all men, and suffering death for His constancy in thus opposing them, He founded, not in Judæa only, but in every corner of the civilized world, an universal empire. No one can deny, that a few centuries after His death, all Europe, and much of Asia and Africa, owned Him for their King. Even with our present experience of what He did, I will venture to say, that, if we could go

back 1850 years in the world's history, believing religion to be a fable, we should none of us imagine that such an experiment tried again could by any possibility lead to success, that such a life and such a death as that of Jesus Christ could lead to the fulfilment of the predictions that He should be the King of the world. In other words, our common sense convinces us, that Jesus of Nazareth was not like Judas of Gaulonitis, or Theudas, or Barchochebas, men who took advantage of popular expectations, and tried to make existing prophecies work out their own fulfilment.

But, moreover, the prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfilment in the New, read as Christians have been ever wont to read them, are not like mere events in political history and certain supposed predictions concerning them. If there be any truth at all in them, they are momentous beyond man's power of thought. They concern our deepest spiritual wants; and they are parts of a connected scheme ordained by God for the satisfaction of those wants. If a great spiritual necessity existed (and who with human longings can say that there did not?); if it was God's purpose at a fixed time in man's history to meet the necessity; is it not even probable that there should have been intimations preceding that which was to be so memorable? And would not those intimations be the very surest proof, that the presignified events were the results of wise purpose and design, not the mere

outfallings of accident in the common course of things.

So then, though I have tried to imagine a case like to it, in supposing that prophecies might have existed pointing to the French Revolution and the Empire of Napoleon; I have failed to make my case in its most important points equal to that which we have in the prophecies which concerned the Messiah. Almost every conceivable prediction concerning a political revolution or a worldly kingdom would tend of its own nature to its own accomplishment; and nothing of this kind could possibly have that deep value for the whole human race, and therefore be so worthy of the Divine intervention and of the Divine solicitude, as the redemption of mankind by the advent of a great Mediator, and the establishment of His reign among men. Indeed we cannot believe it to be likely, that God should commission a great number of men to foretell nothing but the earthly fortunes of an earthly empire. But, on the contrary, if it were His pleasure, as Christians believe it was, to make a revelation of His will to men and to establish a spiritual reign among them, but yet not until some thousands of years after man had been in being; then it is difficult to conceive, that for those thousands of years there should have been an utter silence in heaven, and no intimation from above of that which was coming upon earth. A Messiah to come and no note of preparation of His coming seems an inconsistency. We can hardly believe in

Christ, and not believe in the probability of prophets going before Him. The sudden outblazing of the light, when there had been no dawn, would have blinded, rather than enlightened, mankind. But, if man was to have any responsibility for his own belief, and was to found his belief on reasonable evidence; it is then difficult to conceive him placed in a more favourable condition for forming such belief, than he would have been, if the great object of his faith should come on earth, not only witnessed to by His own words and His own works, but also by the signs and tokens of His coming, which had been given, and which were looked for, centuries before He came, and still more intently at the very time of His appearing.

To recur to what I was saying concerning prophecies leading to their own fulfilment, and impostors or enthusiasts working it out, there is one point very observable in this connection concerning the prophecies of the Old Testament. We cannot fail to notice that, on a cursory view of them, their chief topic and most prominent feature is the kingdom. This the Jews dwelt upon; this the false Messiahs aimed at. But when the people would have made the Lord Jesus a king, He hid Himself from them. He would have no crown on earth but a crown of thorns, would wear no purple but in mockery and scorn. Would any impostor have taken this course, in order to appear as one working out and accomplishing predictions concerning the Great King? Or,

again, could an impostor by such means have led to the fulfilment of these predictions of greatness or glory? If Jesus had been an impostor; He might have taught, He might have suffered, so as to make His teaching and His sufferings seem to correspond with Old Testament prophecies; He might even have persuaded His followers to give out that He was risen from the dead, and that He had been seen going up into heaven; but He could never have provided for the accomplishment of those sayings which speak of Him as a King higher than the kings of the earth, and which promise that all nations shall serve Him and all kings bow down before Him. And yet, as a matter of fact, so it is, that one who, as far as His own actions went, was a simple teacher of truth and an humble sufferer of persecution, was in a short time after His death raised to such a pinnacle of greatness, that the world, which at first rejected and crucified Him, not only owned Him for its King, but hailed him King of kings and Lord of lords, high above all the rulers of the earth; and, for centuries and centuries after His death, every statute-book of every civilized kingdom in the world was professedly modelled in accordance with His teaching and in conformity with His laws. This was the consummation, this was the victory, this is the kingdom, which has followed on the humble life and the shameful death of the once-despised and rejected Teacher of Nazareth. Could any human foresight have anticipated such an end?

It was no error then of the Jews, that they dwelt naturally and fondly on the predicted *kingdom* of Messiah. Even if no *future* kingdom were to be looked for, we have already seen Jesus crowned with glory and honour. Viewed even in its most worldly aspect, the kingdom of Christ on earth has now for at least fifteen centuries been greater, more extensive, more influential, than any kingdom which has ever been established by conquest or the sword. If it were to grow no farther, it has already surpassed even Jewish anticipations of it, both in its extent and in its duration. They thought of it chiefly as breaking the yoke of their oppressors, as making Judæa the greatest among the nations round them, Edomites and Syrians and Egyptians, and perhaps even Greeks and Italians, owning their supremacy and bringing tribute to their treasury. But even they dreamed not that Spaniards and Gauls and Britons and Germans, Scandinavians and Slaves, and wild tribes of Vandals and Goths and Huns, should come and bow down before the King of the Jews; that vast continents, unknown and unheard of, should be peopled by men, some of whom would own no king but King Messiah; that the very law, laid up in their temple and read every Sabbath in their synagogues, should be sounded out in new temples and on new Sabbaths, week after week, in the distant islands of Europe, in the Steppes of Russia, in the vast plains of America, at the farthest extremity of Africa, and in the new continents and

islands in the South Pacific Ocean; continents and islands which the ships of Solomon could never have reached, and the wisdom of Solomon could never have imagined.

The error of the Jew then, was not that he dwelt on the kingdom; it was only that he looked for a kingdom of this world, that he mistook that which was to be the true blessing of the kingdom, and that he leapt over that which was to come before the kingdom. The kingdom was clearly foretold and deeply yearned for; but there were mysteries, which had been hidden for ages and generations, hidden, not because there was no prediction of them, but because there was a veil upon the heart of those that read the predictions. Those mysteries were the death of the Messiah, the calling of the Gentiles, and the judgment of the Jews who should be disobedient[1]. Now, supposing it to be true,

[1] The obscurity of prophecy, though sometimes objected against, is really a very important element in the question of evidences. If prophecy were part of a preparatory dispensation, we could not expect it to be plain and distinct as that for which it was preparatory. Unbelievers object to some prophecies, e. g. that in Isaiah concerning Cyrus, as being too specific. It is argued, that such prophecy must really have been, not prophecy, but history. Such objections prove at least an instinctive feeling, that what is presignified will be more obscure than what is narrated. Now no one can say that the Messianic prophecies were delivered after the event; for, without controversy, they were all pre-Christian. But then their partial obscurity made it far more difficult for impostors or enthusiasts to take advantage of popular expectations, and so to work out popular predictions. They might try to

that the principal theme of prophecy was the glory of Christ's kingdom, His death and the troubles which should follow being less clearly, though still sufficiently, indicated in the books of the Old Testament and in the ceremonies of the Law; supposing that the natural self-complacence of the Jews and their carnal, worldly character would lead them to dwell wholly on the hope of blessings, and to esteem them as rather earthly than spiritual blessings: then can we conceive anything wiser or more merciful than that which we believe to have been God's last message to them before the coming of the final trial; I mean, than the prophecy contained in the last two chapters of Malachi, and its fulfilment in the preaching of John the Baptist immediately before the coming of Christ?

It is plain from all that goes before my text, that the Jews in the days of Malachi were in a state of corruption and impiety, and yet that, as afterwards in the days of John and of Jesus Christ, they were looking for a promised period of blessing

work out the more obvious and salient parts of the predictions; but there were hidden parts, which have become plainer since the fulfilment, but which were neglected and unseen before, and were therefore quite unsuited to the designs or fancies of impostors or enthusiasts. In this sense "the kingdom of God came not with observation" (Luke xvii. 20). There were notes given by which it might be known, when it came; but not such that men might observe it, as one standing on a watch-tower sees the approach of a victorious army. (See Dr Christ. Wordsworth, note on Luke xvii. 20.)

and prosperity. The table of the Lord was polluted by offering the blind and the lame in sacrifice, the priests' lips did not keep knowledge, but they had corrupted the covenant of Levi, the people were given up to adultery and treachery. Then, we are told, the word of the Lord was sent to them; and it spoke thus: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold, He shall come, saith the LORD of hosts; but who may abide the day of His coming? or who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." (Mal. iii. 1, 2). And a little farther on: "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." (ch. iv. 1, 2.) And yet a little further, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth (or *the land* הָאָרֶץ) with a curse" (ch. iv. 5, 6).

I will only remark at present, that, whatever

diversity there may have been as to the *forerunner*, the concurrent testimony of Jewish writers is strong in proof, that the ancient Jews believed these passages to concern the coming of the Messiah. But if so, what can be plainer than that the prophet was warning his people, that that coming was not all that in their day dreams they had been fancying. They expected and delighted in the promised Messenger of the covenant, and the prophet confirms their expectation, assuring them that he should come, and come suddenly, to his temple. But then he asks the question, "Who shall abide the day of his coming?" It should be a day burning like an oven, consuming the wicked like stubble, leaving neither root nor branch. It should be "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." And lest it should come too suddenly, and with no time to prepare for its coming, it is promised that a messenger shall be sent to prepare the way of the still greater Messenger of the covenant, and that first messenger is called afterwards "The Prophet Elijah."

This was not wholly new. Amid former promises to Israel, there had been constant warnings, that the fulfilment of the promises was in great measure conditional. God's word should not fail, but it would not be found to have spoken peace to the wicked. Even Moses had warned them in words so memorable, that we might almost imagine before his prophetic soul a vision of that very siege of the city of David, which terminated the political

existence of his people. (See Deut. xxviii.) Often had they been told, that if they were impenitent and unbelieving, the day of the Lord should be to them, not light but darkness. Once more, once at last, before the prophetic Scriptures were sealed for ever, the words came forth in syllables clearer and weightier than before; "Who may abide the day of His coming?" "He is like a refiner's fire;" "That day shall burn as an oven;" "It shall burn up the proud and the wicked." And the canon of the Old Testament is shut up with the saying, "Lest I come and smite the land with a curse."

We hardly need then the witness of the New Testament to teach us, that the Jews looked but to one side of prophecy, when they thought that the coming of Messiah was to be a coming only to glorify their people. To us, who read the prophets now, it seems at times as if their very commonest burden was a burden of woe. Though they denounce the oppressors of Israel; there is not one of them, but lifts up his voice in denouncing the sins of Israel. Rarely, if ever, do they speak in praise of their people. Remonstrance, warning, threats of judgment, are more frequent than even promises and encouragement. But the people heard the promises, and were deaf to the warnings. It was so to the last. And as it was so, what could have been more needful, what more truly marking wisdom and foresight, what more fitting a just and yet a merciful Gover-

nor, than this prediction of Malachi written more than 400 years before the coming of Christ?

Now there are here, in these short passages from which I take my text, four distinct particulars plainly noted: first, a forerunner; secondly, a Messiah; thirdly, a dayspring of mercy to the believing; fourthly, a heavy judgment on the unbelieving and ungodly Israelites. Let us look at them briefly in this order.

In the beginning of the third chapter we have, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." The modern Jews have variously explained this saying. Some of an angel; some strangely enough of the prophet Malachi himself; some of their fancied Messiah Ben Joseph, who, they think, will precede Messiah Ben David. But one very learned rabbi reports the opinion of the most ancient Jews to have been that it concerned Elijah the Tishbite[1]: and St Jerome tells us, that the Jews, who were living in his days, "understood it of Elias the prophet[2]." This at once connects it, as all reasonable criticism must connect it, with what comes but a few verses below[3], "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Moreover, it well deserves our notice, that, in a passage in one of the Talmuds, these two verses are treated as parallel with that magnificent prophecy in Isaiah

[1] R. Tanchum, cited by Pococke *ad h. l.*

[2] Hieronym. *in loc.* [3] ch. iv. 5. (Auth. Version.)

(xl. 3), "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert an highway for our God[1]."

That the Jews have ever looked for Elias in connection with the coming of Messiah, their Talmud[2], their rabbinical writers[3], even still their daily prayers plainly prove[4]. Let me only add one more comment on the whole passage in Malachi by the same learned Jew I just now referred to, the R. Tanchum. "This," he writes, "is without doubt a promise, that there should appear a prophet in Israel a little before

[1] In *Debarim rabba*, sect. 4, fol. 256, 2, hic locus cum illo infra ver. 23 et alio Jesai. XL. 4 conjungitur, ut adpareat, Judæos æque ac nos Christianos hunc locum de eadem persona interpretari. Schœtgen: in Mic. iii. 1.

[2] See עדיות, *Mischna*, Surenhus. tom. II. pars iv. p. 362.

[3] See at length Lightfoot, *H. H.* on Matt. xvii. 10.

[4] Bp. Chandler quotes *Seder Tephilloth*, fol. 126, Ed. Athiæ, Amsterd.:

"Strengthen and confirm us, O God,
and send us the Angel the Redeemer.
Let Elijah thy prophet come quickly in our day
with Messiah, the Son of David, Thy Servant."

חזקנו ואמצנו אל
ושלח לנו המלאך הגואל
בא יבא בימינו אליהו נביאך
עם משיח בן דוד עבדך.

I have been unable to verify this quotation from not having access to the edition referred to, nor can I find the very words in any copy that I have consulted, but similar words are to be found in many of the Jewish Prayers.

the time of the appearance of Messias; and some of the learned do think, that he is Elijah the Tishbite himself....Others think it meant that it should be some great prophet like him in degree, and occupying his place as for what concerns the knowledge of God, and the making manifest His name, and therefore called by the name of Elijah[1]."

So far, then, we have heard only Jewish Scriptures and Jewish commentaries thereon. We have seen Messiah expected, and before Him a messenger, a voice in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight in the desert a highway for our God (Is. xl. 3), a prophet, called by the name of Elijah, i. e. Elijah himself, or one in like degree and like knowledge of God, and like authority to make known His name.

If the Gospel history be true, if Jesus was the Messiah, it is utterly inconceivable that anything can better fit into these prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi than did the coming of John the Baptist just before Jesus, warning to "flee from the wrath to come," to "repent, for the great expected kingdom was at hand,"—to be ready for the One after him and mightier than he, who should put the axe to the root, "whose fan was in His hand, who would throughly purge His floor, gather the wheat into His garner, but burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable." Nothing could be closer to the pro-

[1] See Pococke, *Works*, Vol. I. Comm. on Malachi, iv. 5, p. 191.

phecy; nothing could be more needed by the people. It was the tempering of judgment with mercy. The sins of Israel, like Canaan's of old, had well nigh come to the full. Providentially, as being itself a kind of forerunner of the Advent, there was prevailing at the time an earnest expectation that the Great King was at hand. But though a few pious hearts were patiently waiting for the consolation, the great mass were sunk in sensuality and worldliness, and were looking to the future redemption as a mere raising of their secular condition. Then came the sign in the wilderness, before the sign in the heavens; John, like Elijah, preaching in sackcloth, fearlessly speaking the truth to prince and people; the voice that cried "all flesh is grass," bidding every valley to be exalted and every hill laid low, before all flesh should see the salvation of God.

2. And then—the Christ Himself. So was it in Malachi, "Behold, I send My messenger, and he shall prepare my way before Me;" and then—"the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in" (iii. 1); or again, a little further, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (iv. 2).

It is true, no doubt, that the Targum of Jonathan on the prophet Malachi has not here, as in so many places of the prophets it has, the very name, *Messiah*. The Targum here is almost a literal rendering, word for word, of the Hebrew text. But

the Rabbinical writings most clearly shew, that the ancient interpretation of the synagogue corresponded with the more modern interpretation of the Church. "The Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings" is interpreted in the Talmud itself as meaning the Messiah[1]; and the famous Rabbi, David Kimchi, commenting on the words, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple," says, "This is the King Messiah, and He also is the Angel of the covenant[2]." Moreover, St Jerome tells us, that, when he wrote, the Jews interpreted "the Lord whom ye seek, the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in," of their ἠλειμμένος, Christ, or Messiah[3]. And surely sound interpretation cannot but conclude, that one, who is called "the Lord whom ye seek," who is said to come to His own temple, who is called "the Sun of righteousness," must be some one above prophets and princes and created angels; and yet that He, who is

[1] *Schemoth rabba*, sect. 31, fol. 130, ad verb. Exod. xxii. 26: *Donec veniat* (occidat) *Sol;* h. e. donec veniat Messias, q. d. *Vobis autem.*" Ap. Schœtgen: in Mal. iii. 20.

[2] Quoted by Schœtgen, as above. Some of the Jews, no doubt, interpreted "the Lord whom ye seek" of God, and "the Angel of the Covenant" of Elijah. See Schœtgen, as above, and Pococke on this verse.

[3] In h. l. St Jerome adds, "I wonder the event has not taught them the truth, for what temple would the Lord find now, that it has been destroyed to the very foundations? Or, if they think that it shall be built again before the Messiah cometh; then what will be left for Him to do, if thus all things have been restored by another?" with an allusion of, course, to Zech. vi. 12.

called "the Angel or Messenger of the covenant," cannot be simply and without distinction the Supreme, eternal Father of all things, who sends, but who is never sent; who is the God of Angels, but never can be the Angel of God. Those Jews then surely did rightly, who spoke of Him as the Messiah; and in so doing they bore witness to the truth of the teaching of Christians concerning the Christ; God, yet the Word of God; Son of the eternal Father, and yet sent for us and for our sakes to be the Child of man.

3. And so we may pass on to the consequences of His coming. And first of blessing. He was to be a refiner and purifier, so that the offering of Judah and Jerusalem should be pleasing to the LORD (iii. 3, 4). "To them that feared the name of the Lord the Sun of righteousness was to rise with healing in His wings" (iv. 2). I need not dwell now on the Christian's belief of all the spiritual blessings, which Christ's coming has brought with it to mankind. Let us only for a moment remember, that those blessings first and very specially reached that people, to whom the prophecy was given, and whom it most naturally concerns. Those, who were the heirs of the promises, were not excluded from the inheritance of the promises. Corrupt as was the great body of the Jews, when John the Baptist preached and when the Lord Jesus came to His temple; there were yet among them some that feared the name of the Lord, as, in the days of

Elijah the Tishbite, seven thousand knees had never bowed to Baal. To such indeed the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in his wings. If we think of the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem and Judæa, rapidly gathering strength after the great day of Pentecost; of the large Jewish element, which appears to have formed the nucleus of every Gentile Church; of the fact that, for at least the first century, Christians were in the eyes of heathens not to be distinguished from Jews at all; we shall see great reason to believe that a remnant, bearing no inconsiderable proportion to the whole Jewish nation—a remnant, saved according to the election of grace—found the promises of God to be not yea and nay, but in Christ yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God (2 Cor. i. 18—20).

4. But, as God's promises by Malachi did not fail, so neither did His warnings and His threatenings. From Moses to Malachi these warnings had been sent. "Whosoever will not listen to my words, which that Prophet shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. xviii. 19). "It shall come to pass, that, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought" (Deut. xxviii. 63). So Moses, the first prophet; we have heard the warnings by Malachi, the last prophet in Israel. And never since there was a nation upon earth was judgment so signally executed, as upon that

people, who heard the words and saw the signs of Jesus of Nazareth, and then rejected and crucified Him. They are told us by one who witnessed them. You may read in his narrative every minute particular, and every accumulation of misery, which man's cruelty can possibly inflict upon man. Hundreds of thousands of human beings, cooped up within the devoted city, perished by every form of death, the most loathsome and the most terrible. Every vestige of the city of the Lord of hosts, where David and Solomon and Hezekiah had reigned and worshipped, was obliterated. At this very day the city is a city of desolation; beneath your feet, as you walk over it, is a deep soil filled full, for fathoms below the surface, with the ruins of former greatness. And even more awful is the living monument: millions of human souls, scattered over every nation of the earth, and mingling with none of them, cleaving to the dead carcass of what was once a living faith, and bearing upon their very brow the brand which witnesses, These are the sons of those who sold their Saviour, and who prayed that His blood should be on them and on their children. The words of Malachi have come upon them in their fulness, and the words of Moses, in whom they trusted.

It would, indeed, be hard to imagine anything more exact in its minutest particulars, than the coincidence of the prophecies of Malachi with the facts of the Gospel history—the Messenger to pre-

pare the way, with John preaching in the wilderness—the Lord coming to His temple, the Angel of the Covenant, the Sun of Righteousness, with the Lord Jesus—the mercies promised, with the conversion of multitudes of the people of Israel to the faith and the blessings of the Gospel—the judgments threatened, with the utter desolation of Jerusalem and the still more desolating unbelief of the Jews.

In what I have yet to preach upon, I shall have much to say concerning the Saviour and God's infinite mercies in Him; let me to-day call your thoughts to what we must not be blind to, the terrors of His judgment. If even nature tells its tale truly, it teaches of the severity, as well as of the goodness, of God. If history be true, there are many records in it of the sufferings which pursue guilty nations and guilty men. If the Bible be true, its witness is clearer still, and not less terrible. Nothing in nature or in history can possibly surpass the accounts, which a Jew has left us, of the judgment of God which fell upon his own people. We ourselves can see, that it is still following their children. They had been the Lord's vineyard, and they had brought forth wild grapes. Of all sins no doubt the heaviest must be the sins committed by the special pensioners of God's bounty against His goodness and His love.

There are those, my brethren, who would persuade you to believe, that we wrong the Father of

our spirits, when we interpret in their natural significance the words of Holy Scripture concerning His judgment on the ungodly. God forbid that we should forget, that He is the Father of our spirits and the loving Redeemer of our souls. But what can we really know of Him, but from His own revelations of Himself—His revelations in the book of nature, in the book of the world's history, in the book of our own consciences, but, above all, in that book which contains His own utterances by His prophets, and in these last days by His Son? And do not all conspire to speak of judgment as well as mercy? If the fulfilment of prophecy proves, as surely it does prove, that the Bible is God's book, and God's book sent specially for our moral and spiritual guidance; then what is it short of madness to trust to mere reasonings or intuitions of our own as to God's character or God's dealings with us? Whence can we surely know, or where surely learn God's will, if not from the words which bear His own testimony to their having come down straight to us from heaven? And do they not tell of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched"?

And if we look within, in that book which too was God's writing in us, though its characters have been blotted and marred, can we not read even in its every page that there are mysteries within us, around us, over us? We are mysterious to ourselves, and God is even more mysterious to us. We

must not therefore reject a truth, because we find in it a mystery. One thing, indeed, is plainly written, written wherever we turn, in history, in conscience, and in Scripture, so that he may run that reads it; and that is, the constant record of sin and the ever following record of sorrow.

But the warning which should most closely come home to us in this history of Jerusalem is, that the great reason why the Jews were rejected was that they rejected Christ. Prizing their privileges as honours, but forgetting them as responsibilities, they were ill prepared for their Saviour when He came suddenly to His temple. They had driven away the King's servants, and then they slew His Son.

We have the vineyard now. We have, even more than they had, the truth and the light. "Let us fear then, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it;" lest worldliness or sensuality should blind our hearts, that, whilst we think our faith to be bright and our hopes to be sure, the Lord may come and find us unready. Light which brings no warmth, and does not dispel darkness, will be found but a misleading meteor. But that humble faith, which may seem to hold us down from daylight, will yet let our faces look upwards—upwards with a longing which cannot but be satisfied, to which the promise will surely be established, and on which, perhaps when the night seems darkest, the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings.

SERMON III.

THE INCARNATION AND THE NATIVITY.

MICAH V. 2.

But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. [Heb. "from the days of eternity."]

I HAVE dwelt upon the fact that the ancient Jews, grounding their expectations on the writings of their own prophets, believed in a Messiah who should restore the kingdom to Israel, and believed that He should come at the very time when Jesus Christ was born. They found predictions of this in every portion of their Scriptures. They found them in the promise to Eve, in the promise to Abraham, in the prophecies of Jacob and Balaam and Moses, in the Psalms of David, in Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel, in Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

I have tried to shew, that a general view of the great facts of Christian history proves, that the events, with marvellous accuracy, answered to the

expectations. In my last Sermon I spoke somewhat of the defects in the Jewish opinions, and shewed that those defects were not in the prophecies, but in the interpretations of them. All that the Jews left out was clearly written, but it had not been honestly read.

Before I go on farther to speak of some special prophecies, of which my text is among the chief, let me ask your attention to one simple thought. Jewish expositors, the New Testament, Christians after them, are in wonderful harmony on this, viz. that the Old Testament is full of Christ. Man's history begins with a promise of Messiah. The canon of the Old Testament ends with a promise of Messiah. Wellnigh every book in Scripture teems with anticipations of Messiah. Now I venture to say, that there is nothing else of which the Bible is thus full to overflowing, save one. That one is God. The Bible professes to be a revelation of God and of His will: but neither prophet, priest, nor angel, is the subject of that revelation nor the object of our faith. Not even Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, the chief instrument for communicating God's will and law, is propounded to the Jew as the object of his hope, or even as the example for his imitation. But the Messiah is held up continually as the desire of all nations, the bestower of all blessings; and the rejection of Him is to be the ground of all curses, the cause of all condemnation. If this fact stood alone; what must be built upon it as to the dignity of Him whom it concerns? In this He is all unlike

patriarchs and prophets and saints and angels. He is like none, but God.

Let us pass from this general reflection to the view of some special passages, which speak of the greatness and the glories of the Prince that was to come. It is perhaps remarkable, that the very strongest are those which refer to His birth and to His birthplace. If anything could mark Him out as a man, and not an angel, it is that He should be born as men are all born: but it is when this human, common birth is told to us, that we read, in the most glowing language, of His glory and His greatness. I have chosen for my text the well-known verse in Micah, and I propose to consider it first.

We know that, according to the history given by the first Christian historian, Herod sent for the scribes and elders, and asked them where Messiah should be born, and that they at once answered, "at Bethlehem;" quoting in proof of this these words of the prophet Micah[1]. I believe, it may be said, that every extant Jewish authority most fully confirms St Matthew's statement, that this prophecy was believed to refer to Messiah. It is true, Theodoret, a father of the fifth century[2], tells us that some Jews in his time had attempted to interpret the passage of Zorobabel, who, though not born at Bethlehem, was a descendant of David, whose city Bethlehem was; and some Christians[3], who would pare down their faith to the smallest dimensions

[1] Matt. ii. 5, 6. [2] *In loc.* [3] *e. g.* Grotius.

possible, have eagerly caught at this solution of the prophecy. But from the first it was not so. The Targum of Jonathan is the oldest existing commentary, if we should call it a commentary, on this and the other writings of the prophets. His paraphrase of the passage is, "And Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art (*or*, art thou ?) little to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah. From thee shall come forth before Me *Messiah*, that He may exercise dominion in Israel, whose name is spoken from of old, from the days of eternity." The Jerusalem Talmud confirms the interpretation of the Targum[1]; Kimchi, Abarbanel, Tanchum, and the whole consensus of Jewish commentators proclaim as with one voice, זהו מלך המשיח, This is King Messiah[2]. And so we have here unmistakeably an example of that, on which I have been dwelling so long, an example of a passage of the Old Testament, professedly predictive of some great coming King, and that passage unanimously interpreted by the Jews as referring to the King Messiah.

Of course, the modern Jews find a difficulty in explaining how their expected Messiah shall be born at a city, which is no longer what Bethlehem was. They are satisfied to believe, that His being born of the seed of David, who himself was born there, will

[1] See Lightfoot, *H. H.*, and Wetstein in Matt. ii. 1.

[2] See Schœtgen in *h. l.*; Pococke in Micah, p. 43; Wetstein in Matt. ii. 1.

fulfil the words of the promise, that Messiah shall come out of Bethlehem. Thus they do but drive the difficulty one step further back; for if Bethlehem is a deserted city, the descendants of David are all unknown, and the roll of their genealogies utterly obliterated. And so it is, that some of their ancient writers have declared that Messiah was born about the time that the temple was destroyed, but that winds and tempests snatched Him from His mother's arms[1]. Where He is now they tell us not, but He shall be revealed at the appointed season. But at last, finding all notes of time fail them, and all conjectures come to nothing, they pronounced a curse on all who tried to reckon the true period for Messiah's appearance, saying, "May their soul be confounded, who compute the times[2]."

Clear, however, it must be to all who have eyes to see, that we have here a note of time, as well as a note of place, concerning the birth of the great King. In some sense or other, He was to spring out of Bethlehem. If it was literally that the town of Bethlehem should be His birthplace; then where was Bethlehem in any proper sense, as the Bethlehem where David dwelt, after the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish state? If, however, no more was meant than that Messiah should be of Bethlehem, as being a descendant of Jesse the Bethlehemite; then where were the descendants of Jesse

[1] See Lightfoot, *H. H.* in Matt. ii.

[2] Lightfoot as above.

and of David, after the first century of the Christian era? All of those descendants, that the jealous vigilance of the Emperor Domitian could find, were a few inconspicuous Christian grandchildren of the Christian Apostle, St Jude[1].

Now it is most probable, that the words, "Out of thee shall come forth to Me," would be naturally understood to signify, "In thee shall be born." The verb (יצא "come forth") is one frequently used to designate the birth of an infant: and hence the answer, which the scribes gave to Herod, is the answer which they were most likely to have given. And the care with which the Evangelists record the birth, and all the circumstances of the birth, at Bethlehem, lest it should be objected that Jesus was born, not in Bethlehem but in Galilee, is itself a proof, that the Jews of their time interpreted this prophecy as a prediction of the *place* of birth, and not merely of the family and descent of the Christ.

The same word, however, is used in another prophecy by another prophet concerning the same event; and the word there must apply to the ancestry, not to the birthplace of the Messiah: yet still in its simplest significance it has a mark of place. The passage I speak of is Isa. xi. 1, "There shall *come forth* (יצא again) a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the

[1] Euseb. *H. E.* III. 19.

spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord[1]; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." I need not go on to cite the entire chapter. The consequence of the coming forth of this Branch of Jesse is described as such a reign of peace, that "the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid"..... "They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Once more the Targum, the Talmud, the rabbins, agree, with singular unanimity, to interpret this prophecy also of the Messiah. Nay, wherever the name or title "Branch" occurs, there we are told Messiah is always intended[2]. Taking this then as

[1] "The Messias shall be blessed with six blessings, viz. the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and fear of the Lord." R. Solomon in Ruth iii. 15, and Chaldee Paraphrase there. Lightfoot, *Harmony*, Vol. IV. p. 131.

[2] Schœtgen (on Isai. iv. 2; xi. 1) gives many passages which prove that the name *Branch* was universally interpreted of Messiah. This may be said to be a Jewish canon for the interpretation of prophetic language. In like manner David, where not intelligible of the literal David, son of Jesse, is always interpreted of the Messiah. The Targum on Hosea iii. 5, Jer. xxx. 9, puts *Messiah* for *David*. The Talmud, *Sanhed.* xi. 31, proves from Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, that David is the name of Messiah. So also Kimchi. See Chandler, *Defence*, p. 191. So again the words "In

the acknowledged interpretation, we may see how entirely this prediction accords in character with the prediction of Micah in my text. It speaks of the birth, of the human origin, the human ancestry of the Messiah, and it passes thence almost in a breath to speak of the greatness, the glories, the peace of His Kingdom. In the prophet Micah, the "Prince shall come out of Bethlehem, who shall rule over Israel." In the prophet Isaiah, the "Branch from the root of Jesse" shall have such empire, that peace shall be spread abroad under His dominion, and the whole earth through it shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

But to return to the text itself; there is in it an expression more remarkable than any even in the glowing words of the eleventh chapter of Isaiah. Both speak of an earthly origin and a human birth; both speak of empire and dominion and glory. But Micah adds, in designation of the Messiah, that "His goings forth have been of old, from the days of eternity." Without doubt, wherever words relating to that which is eternal are found, it may be possible so to extenuate them, as to make them mean that which is only very ancient or very permanent. But we may safely say of the words here written, that, if they do not refer to a past *eternity*, then the

the latter days," wherever they occur in prophecy, are interpreted by the rabbins to mean *the days of Messiah*. "Wherever these words באחרית הימים are read, there the discourse is concerning the days of Messiah." Kimchi ap. Schœtgen: Tom. III. p. 155.

Hebrew tongue was incapable of conveying that thought. The two expressions are used which most clearly indicate the never-beginning past of the Creator, as though by the force of these repetitions all ambiguity should be precluded. Again, the word, rendered His "going forth," is of the same root and significance as the word, "shall come forth to me;" and as the latter refers to the Messiah's birth or origin, either from David or from Bethlehem, so the former should as clearly indicate some mysterious origination from the days of eternity.

Such has been the Christians' explanation of this saying as concerning their Christ and King. His going forth from Bethlehem points to His human birth. His going forth from eternity points as clearly, so they believe, to His being begotten before all worlds. Of course in this the Jews are not at one with us; and in order to make the passage to their minds more intelligible, they understand it merely as saying that it had been decreed from all eternity, that the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem, or of the family of the Bethlehemite. No less a commentator than Calvin has adopted this rendering, by force of which the passage will fit in to his own great scheme of doctrine concerning the eternal predestination of God[1]. Here then the issue

[1] It was not that Calvin preferred his own favourite system of predestinarianism to his belief in the divinity of his Saviour. Calvin was really a great divine, though too narrow in some of his views. In his interpretation of prophecy he was actuated by

lies. Shall we understand the words in their literal sense, that, whereas Messiah was to come forth from Bethlehem, so still He had come forth from everlasting ages? or shall we understand only, that it had been eternally decreed and long ago proclaimed, that at the time appointed He should come and should be born? There seems no difficulty in taking the simple and literal sense, if we believe in the great truth expressed by it, and believe also that that truth was not only revealed in the Gospel, but also anticipated in the Prophets. If the Messiah was to come, if that Messiah was to be a Son of David; it was like enough that He should be called a Branch of the root of Jesse, and that it should be said of Him, that He should come out of Bethlehem. If Messiah was moreover to be the Son of God, whose being, like His Father's, was from of old from the days of eternity; then too it was like enough, that this too should be spoken of in prophecy; and there would be no need to fine down the force of the prophetic teaching, where such a thought is visible in it. Certainly, however, if it shone but through one single passage of the Old Testament; we might doubt the correctness of our interpretation of that passage, even when we did not doubt that the doctrine was true. We might accept the Jewish evasion,

a conscientious desire not to strain the language of Scripture into predictions of Christ, or of the divinity of Christ, and he not unnaturally was sharpsighted on passages which might seem to bear on the predestination of God, whether Calvinistic predestination or not.

and, with Calvin, consent to explain away the obvious sense, thinking that the prophet might speak of Messiah as born from eternity, much as afterwards St John wrote of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

But most assuredly this passage neither stands alone, nor is it the strongest of those which proclaim the past, as well as the future, glories of the King that should come.

In the xxiiird of Jeremiah, vv. 5, 6, we have another prophecy, which every Jewish authority interprets of the Messiah. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch[1], and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." No doubt, there is some uncertainty as to the meaning of this name. As Moses called an altar Jehovah-Nissi, "The LORD, my banner;" so it has been supposed, that the King of Israel might be called "The Lord our righteousness[2]." It would be wrong to deny that this ambiguity exists. Many *places* mentioned in Scripture were called by names bearing some resemblance to the name here given to Messiah, as Jehovah-Nissi (Exod. xvii. 15), Jehovah-Shammah

[1] Concerning the title *Branch*, see above, p. 62, note 2.

[2] So Kimchi, Aben Ezra and most Jewish Commentators.

(Ezek. xlviii. 35), El-Elohe-Israel (Gen. xxxiii. 20)[1]. But the very remarkable and significant name thus given to a *man* is without parallel, at least without parallel of *such* a name given to any *other* man.

We cannot fail to remember in this connection the famous passage in Isaiah, where the Virgin-born is called by the name *Emmanuel,* i. e. "God with us." I cannot dwell upon this passage now. It does not suit my general purpose, because the Jews do not interpret it of the Messiah; and it would require a whole separate discourse properly to elucidate it. I would only express my fullest and most mature conviction, that, though the Jews have not referred it to Messiah, as they have done every other passage which I have hitherto quoted, though too many Christians have believed its first intention not to be of the Son of God, but of the son of Isaiah, yet all sound criticism, as much as all reverent faith, must interpret it, not as a prophecy of double sense, but as having one sense only, and that as predictive of that Virgin-born Son of Jesse, who should restore the kingdom to the house of David, when Syria and Samaria had become desert and desolate.

But to pass from this: let me remind you, that on Sunday last we were dwelling on the prediction of

[1] The same title, "The LORD our righteousness" Jehovah-Zidkenu is given, Jer. xxxiii. 16, to Jerusalem: but some external and all internal evidence is in favour of the reading לוֹ, not לָהּ, in which case the title would be given, not to Jerusalem, but (as in Jer. xxiii. 6, with which it is closely parallel) to the BRANCH.

Malachi, where the Messiah's names were "the Lord, whom ye seek—the Angel of the Covenant, whom ye delight in—the Sun of righteousness:" and that there the Lord, who should come, was said to come to *His own temple:* words that, well weighed, can scarcely speak less plainly, than the plainest declaration of His Deity.

These then are some of the prophetic sayings, in which there seems a resemblance to the teaching of Micah concerning the Divine, as well as the human, nature of the Messiah; and which seem sufficient to satisfy us, that we need not distort the meaning of my text, for fear of making it say more than other prophets have said.

But there is one other passage, on which I would gladly dwell a little more at length. It comes from the prophet Isaiah, a prophet closely contemporary with the prophet Micah[1], and whose language has constantly a marked resemblance to his. I mean the famous passage (Is. ix. 6, 7), "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to

[1] Micah prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Isaiah prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this." It is scarcely possible to read these words, even carelessly, without observing that they bear a marked resemblance to the general language of Messianic prophecy. The promise to David, that his seed should sit on his seat for ever, the limiting of that promise afterwards to one great Prince, whose kingdom should be peace, and of whose kingdom there should be no end—this is the very constant and conspicuous character of Messianic prediction. Accordingly, the most ancient existing Jewish interpretation is Messianic. The Targum of Jonathan distinctly introduces as one of the titles of the Prince the very word "Messiah[1]." It is true that the modern Jews, and after them Gesenius and other German interpreters, have chosen to apply the prophecy not to Messiah, but to Hezekiah, the young prince, who had lately been born, and who was soon to become the king of Judah. But two arguments alone seem fatal to such a sense. First, it is observable that the blessings of this king's reign are specially promised, not to Hezekiah's own kingdom of Judah, but to Zabulun and Naphtali, and Galilee of the Gentiles[2]. Over them Hezekiah never reigned, nor could the blessings of his govern-

[1] "His name has been called by the Wonderful, Counsel, Mighty God, abiding for ever, Messiah, whose peace shall be multiplied upon us in our days." Jonath: in Jesai. ix. 6.

[2] Is. ix. 1.

ment in any way extend to them[1]. Secondly, we may remember that Isaiah, who without dispute wrote this prophecy, lived to see Hezekiah reigning in Jerusalem. He lived to see him a pious prince, but by no means a prince of peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end. Far otherwise. It was a reign of war and trouble and anxiety. In the fourth year of it, Sennacherib carried away the ten tribes of Israel captive; in the fourteenth year, the same Sennacherib took all the fenced cities of Judah; and, to save the capital, Hezekiah gave him tribute of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold; even taking all the silver from the temple, and all the gold-work from the doors and the pillars of the temple, that he might be able to pay. Yet again, Sennacherib so straitly besieged Jerusalem, that only by a special miracle was the city delivered (2 Kings xviii. xix. Is. xxxvi. xxxvii.). Finally, Isaiah himself prophesied to Hezekiah, that, ere long, the king of Babylon should carry captive his sons and make slaves of them, and take away all his treasures, which he and his fathers had laid up in store (2 Kings xx; Is. xxxix.). If we suppose Isaiah no more than a vulgar soothsayer, but yet of common cunning and sagacity; would he have left behind him one prediction of Hezekiah's unbounded prosperity and never-failing dominion, and then, along with an his-

[1] See Hengstenberg, *Christology*, on this passage.

torical narrative telling of his troubles and wars and sorrows, another prophecy of the speedy destruction of his house, and desolation of his kingdom?

Assuming then as correct the more ancient interpretation concerning the Messiah, and not the more modern interpretation concerning Hezekiah; let us consider some of the titles given to the Prince, who is spoken of as the child born, the Son given to the people of Israel.

The first title is "wonderful" (פֶּלֶא), or more properly, for it is a substantive, "wonder" or "miracle." This is the word commonly used to designate the wonders or miracles which God wrought for His people by Moses or otherwise (see Ex. xv. 11; Ps. lxxvii. 12, 15). In one only passage do we find the corresponding adjective, "*wonderful*" (פְּלִאי). It is where the angel appeared to Manoah, and when Manoah enquired his name, "The angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is *wonderful*[1]?" It was of this angel of the Lord that Manoah said afterwards, "We shall surely die, because we have seen *God*." Passing over the name "*Counsellor*," with only the remark that it designates wisdom, and is applied both to the highest counsellors of state, and to kings and princes themselves[2], we come next to the title

[1] Judges xiii. 18. A. V. "secret;" margin "Wonderful." LXX. *θαυμαστὸν*, as in Is. ix. 6, פֶּלֶא *θαυμαστός*.

[2] יוֹעֵץ, one who gives counsel or advice, used both of *counsellors* or *ministers* of the king, 1 Chron. xxvii. 32, Ezra vii. 28, and

"Mighty God." That this is the true translation, no reasonable doubt exists. The Septuagint has it so, Θεὸς ἰσχυρός; the Targum has it so, אֱלָהָא גִּבָּרָא; the same two Hebrew words occur together several times, and in *every* other passage where they do so occur, they are, and they must be, rendered as here, "the mighty God." Only in the next chapter (Is. x. 21) we have them occurring again, and no one doubts their meaning there. We read them elsewhere in such passages as Deut. x. 17, "A great God, mighty and terrible[1]." We shall not then be moved if we find, that one ancient Jewish version, that of Aquila, renders the words here, not "mighty God," but ἰσχυρὸς, δυνατὸς, "strong and powerful[2];" and if we learn that Gesenius and some other rationalists follow Aquila in thus wresting the passage from its plain and obvious significance. It may be true that the word אֵל means not only *God*, but *might* or

often parallel with *king, prince*, Job iii. 14; xii. 17. Is. i. 26. (See Gesen. in v.) The LXX. have μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος. Theodoret observes, σύμβουλος δὲ καλεῖται, ὡς τῆς πατρικῆς βουλῆς κοινωνὸς, ὡς πάντα εἰδὼς ὅσα καὶ ὁ Πατήρ. In *h. l.*

[1] Deut. x. 17. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא. What shews this especially is that where אֵל and גִּבּוֹר occur, not in connection but in antithesis, גִּבּוֹר is put for *a mighty man*, but אֵל for *God* in opposition to *him*, *e.g.* Ps. lii. 3 (1. E.V.).

[2] This is altogether against the Masoretic accents, which unite the words אֵל־גִּבּוֹר, as substantive and adjective. And this Masoretic pointing is both ancient in itself, and no doubt preserves the far more ancient traditional exposition of the Jews.

mighty one; but in the latter sense it is very rare indeed; in the former sense it meets us in every page. The natural presumption therefore is always in favour of its usual significance; and in combination with the word which here qualifies it, it occurs nowhere but as signifying God[1].

Next comes the title which is in the Authorized Version, "Everlasting Father." The LXX. have, it is true, rendered it "the Father of the world to come," thereby distinctly giving their suffrage for the Messianic interpretation of the prophecy[2], but greatly lowering the force of the original. But the Targum of Jonathan rightly paraphrases it קַיָּם לְעָלְמַיָּא "abiding for ever." Literally, indeed, the words must be translated "the Father of eternity;" but it is now mostly thought that the whole phrase is one of those Orientalisms in which *father*, or *lord*, or *child*, is used as indicating a *possessor*, or one to whom a particular quality may be attributed. Thus *birds*, in Hebrew, are called "lords of the wing" (Prov. i. 17); *dreamers* are called "lords

[1] אֵלֵי גִבּוֹרִים, Ez. xxxii. 21, is no exception to this; and it even is doubtful whether here it may not probably be rendered *Gods*. The LXX. perhaps so understood it, when they translated γίγαντες, meaning probably *idol gods, demon gods*.

[2] "The age or the world to come," עוֹלָם הַבָּא is the common Jewish phrase for the reign of Messiah. It is very doubtful whether the LXX. rendered thus, as taking עַד to mean *an age*. It is quite possible that, believing "the world to come," or the Messianic reign to be eternal, they may have interpreted עַד, *eternity*, to mean the eternal reign of the Messiah.

of the dream" (Gen. xxxvii. 19); an *old man* is called the "child of years" (Lev. xii. 6); *wicked men* are called "children of Belial;" and though there is no instance in Biblical Hebrew of a similar usage of *father*, yet in the cognate dialects such an usage is common and familiar[1]. But whether we render "*Father* of eternity," or "*possessor* of eternity," we must render "*eternity.*" The word is one which occurs perpetually, but always in this one sense[2]. It is the word which ends, as with a climax, that familiar phrase, "for ever and *ever.*" It is the word in that magnificent title, "the High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity[3]." It at least, then, as it is used here, ascribes to the King Messiah, as one of His attributes, that which in another chapter of the same prophet is declared to be the highest habitation of Jehovah. And so, after every effort to extenuate the force of the language in this prophecy, Gesenius and other critics of like prejudice are obliged to remind us, that it was the custom of the Eastern nations to speak in terms of servile adulation to their kings, and to ascribe to them the attributes of God. But we may reply to them in

[1] It is doubtful whether אָב is ever so used in Hebrew, but such use is well known in Arabic.

[2] All that Gesenius can say for a lower sense is, that perhaps it may have meant *time, duration,* as related to the verb עָדָה, to go, pass away; but he gives no instance of its ever being used in any sense but that of eternity.

[3] שֹׁכֵן עַד (Isai. lvii. 15).

the words of one not too ready to see Messiah in prophecy or the Godhead of Messiah: "Beware how you believe that those haughty titles, which the pride of later princes in Asia arrogated to themselves, were ever attributed in the simplicity of the ancient times of Isaiah to any king of Judah or Israel or Syria. To no man, who was not also God, can any of those things belong which we read in these two verses of the prophet[1]." Where, may we ask, is there any example of such language from a prophet to a king? Once, and once only, I believe, it is recorded that the prophet Daniel, in the court of the King of Persia, used the common courtly salutation, "King Darius, live for ever" (Dan. vi. 6). But let us think for a moment of Samuel's reproof of Saul, of Gad's denunciation of David, of the man of God that cursed the altar at Bethel (1 Kings xiii.), of Elijah before Ahab and Jezebel and Ahaziah, of Micaiah, the son of Imlah, before Ahab and Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii.), of Jeremiah during the sieges of Jerusalem (see Jer. xxi. &c.), or of this very prophet Isaiah rebuking Ahaz, and predicting even to the godly Hezekiah the destruction of his city and the captivity of his children. Where do we hear one word of adulation, one word even of what in our day we should esteem needful courtesy? There is no instance of it from a prophet to a king, from one end of the Old Testament to the other. Stern denunciation is the rule; and courtly flattery

[1] Rosenmüller, *in loc.* p. 369.

is utterly without example. And shall we dare to say, that he, who of all the prophets most loudly protests against idolatrous worship or the giving of God's glory to another, should have so far forgotten his very nature, as to say of a mere child of Adam, that he should be called "Wonderful" (as God's greatest works, nay, as God Himself is wonderful), "Mighty God," "Eternal One[1]"?

We have, then, here in Isaiah, as we have also in the words of my text, a promise, that One should be born, born as a little child in Israel, who should be called by all the names of God, and should have the everlasting nature of Him, "who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 16).

[1] Jarchi and Kimchi do not refer all these titles to "the child born, the Son given," but to God, and give only the one title "Prince of Peace" to the former; rendering thus, "The Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal one, shall call his name Prince of Peace." It is true, the Chaldee renders "the Wonderful shall call his name Counsellor, &c.:" but even this is contrary to the Masoretic pointing, which is followed by our translators. The impersonal use of the verb, especially in such a context, is most common (see, for instance, Ex. x. 11, 22). The absence of the article before פֶּלֶא, יוֹעֵץ, &c., is fatal to the theory, that they should be here names of God. But who, that is used to the majestic simplicity of the prophetic language when speaking of the Most High, can believe, that Isaiah would have thus strung together four titles, instead of saying simply "God," "the Lord," or perhaps "the Lord God of hosts." Enumeration of lofty titles, when the Messiah's glories are foretold, is natural; enumeration of various names in the other case is absolutely impossible. Modern critics, however disposed to follow the Jews in their scepticism, are sensible that this exposition is indefensible.

How far the more ancient and more pious Jews looked into the depths of such sayings as these, it is hard for us at this time to judge. There are, indeed, in a few of their still extant writings some shadows of the truth, which look as though they were at least feeling their way up to this great "mystery of godliness." But the expectation, so current, of earthly conquests and a kingdom of this world, would square but ill with the belief that its king should be the King of kings. This, at all events, deserves our notice, that the state of Jewish expectation accounts for the subsequent state of the Jewish people. All looked for a Messiah. A few had apparently somewhat of spiritual insight and spiritual foresight; but the multitude wished only for a *man*, who should tread down the enemies of their nation, and make peace for Israel by turning the world without into a wilderness. Hence, when the true Messiah came, all would have accepted Him, if He had shewed Himself an earthly conqueror. But when His crown was to be reached only through His cross, and they who would reign with Him must also suffer with Him; the chaff was sifted from the wheat, and all were not Israel who were outwardly descended of Israel. The Cross was a stumbling-block to them; but so, too, was the Godhead of the Saviour. Both belonged to a great spiritual economy, and they had looked for a carnal kingdom.

Of the two divisions of the Israelites, Peter was the type of one, Judas of the other. Both believed

that a king was coming, both fell below the truth in their expectations of Him. But to one it was revealed, not by flesh and blood, but by the Father in heaven, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God; the other, when he found that the glory he had looked for was beyond the grave, drew back from following the Saviour, and even betrayed Him to be crucified. Peter, with all his failings and his falterings, was the Israelite indeed, and the type of the great Jewish Church, whose foundations were laid by his preaching of his Master. Judas was the type of the unbelieving and the impenitent Jew—type in his readiness to accept the looked-for king—type in his sordid hope of mere worldly rank and wealth—type in his ultimate rejection of Jesus —type in the sadness of his final impenitence, in the fearfulness of his final doom.

But, if the Godhead of the Redeemer lay hid so securely, and now stands out so boldly in the prophecies of the Old Testament; what shall we say of those hints, which are dropped around us, of the followers of Jesus but partially understanding His doctrine concerning Himself, looking on Him with the natural reverence of the disciple for a martyred Master, investing His memory with a halo of glory, and at length elevating Him to the rank of a Deity? If there be any truth in the history that remains of them, were they not all "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken" concerning Him? slowly and against all

previous prejudices, at length awakening to the conviction, that He was indeed from above and above all? And, if there be any meaning in words whatever, did not Micah and Isaiah and Malachi as much de-declare His Godhead and His eternity, as it was ever afterwards declared by St John, St Peter or St Paul, by Athanasius, or Hilary, or Augustine?

If we take only this prophecy of Isaiah, we learn there, not vaguely but with almost scholastic accuracy, the great doctrine of the Christian belief. First, the child born, then the Son given: the child, like any child of man, born of a woman in the world; but the Son *given* as a gift to man. The child must be a child of man; the Son may be a Son of God. And not only may be, but in the words of Andrewes: "That which is born beginneth then first to have his being; that which is given presupposeth a former being, for be it must, that it may be given." And still, though it is here intimated that there is an earthly child and yet a heavenly Son, there is no division of the two, but a strict unity of both. It is said afterwards, "The government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God." It is the same child, the same Son, who bears the government upon His humanity, and who is yet called by the names of the Highest in His Deity. Not two; not *their* shoulders—not *their* name. No, but *one*—*His* shoulders, *His* name. One, who lay an infant in

the manger in Bethlehem; One who reigneth in heaven through all eternity; One, who was the "Counsellor" of God the Father when He laid the foundations of the earth; One, who should dwell here in the wilderness of this world, with all the feebleness of a "child" of man.

But if it be indeed true that in the counsels of His wisdom God decreed to give this gift of His own Son to man; surely it must have been because that wisdom saw, how loudly and how deeply our needs were calling for it. Our very poverty makes us insensible to our wants. Those, who never left the darkness, cannot have much craving for the light. But surely, unless there were a terrible potency in sin to separate between God and man; there never would have been devised the union of God with man in the Person of the Saviour of mankind. Nothing can speak to us in tones more audible of our own danger or of God's love. If our danger were not inconceivable; God would never have brought us a rescue from it, which is not only inconceivable, but infinite as His own infinity. If the ever blessed Son in His Majesty had not seen the deep chasm which sin had rent between earth and heaven, He would not have come down from heaven to earth, that He might lay one hand on heaven and one on earth, and so join them again together in Himself. It is plain, therefore, that this is our standing—infinite danger before us, infinite love over us. What think *we* of

it? Shall we be blind to both? and so continue in the danger, and neglect the love? Or shall the love move us—move us to quit the danger and to take shelter in the Saviour for ever? Morally and spiritually we are standing now, where Israel stood of old. Their hopes were our hopes; their trials our trials; their dangers our dangers. Fancied wisdom and sordid sensuality blinded the Israelites that they should not see, and turned away their ears that they should not hear. It must be in fighting against these, in humble thoughts of ourselves, in struggling out of sensuality and indifference and indolence, in listening to the dictates of an awakened conscience and the whisperings of the Spirit within us, that we can see in Christ all that is worthy of our hopes, and all that is satisfying to our hearts. It is with us now the day of the Son of Man, as it was with them when He was born in Bethlehem, and before they had crucified Him on Calvary. May God grant to us, at least in this our day, that we may know the things which belong unto our peace, before they are hid from our eyes.

SERMON IV.

THE PASSION AND THE ATONEMENT.

Isai. liii. 3—6.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

I HAVE tried to shew that, 1800 years ago, there existed in Israel a general expectation of a great deliverance to be effected by a great Deliverer, and that this expectation was founded on specific predictions in the Jewish books. The existence of Messianic prophecy is a fact so definite, that even unbelievers have been forced to acknowledge it. But writers, such as Schleiermacher, have explained it all away, by supposing that what we believe to have been predictions were in truth no more than indistinct longings for redemption, little beyond that which may have found utterance among the heathen.

The answer to this is, first, that the prophecies were too definite. They pointed, not only to redemption, but to a Redeemer. It was the one great Servant of God, who was to come and to conquer. A forerunner was to prepare His way. He was to be of definite race and lineage, born in a well-known town, with special notes of time; viz. when the fourth Empire was ruling, before the kings had ceased in Israel, or the temple had been laid desolate, and not more than seventy times seven years from the building of that temple and of the streets of the city after the return from captivity. Very definite, but very wonderful attributes are given to Him, all the sympathies of man and all the power of God.

But, next, beyond this definiteness of character and time and place, we have the fact, that the prophets warned the people against expecting only good from the coming of their King. The vague longings of the Israelites, quickened by the eloquence of their prophets, were pointing to a deliverer, who should bring peace and plenty at home, victory and dominion abroad. But their very last prophet warned them, that there was destruction before them as well as deliverance; danger that they might reject their King and be rejected by Him, as well as hope that they might receive Him, and so be blessed by Him.

Surely this is all unlike that mere restless longing of an unsatisfied spirit, which has made so many look hopefully to the future, as if laden with a

brighter hope and a better inheritance. Dreams of peace and plenty and victory might take to themselves a shape, a habitation, and a name. But why did the dark shadow come over them? and how do we read so clearly the destruction of the unbelieving Jerusalem, as the very immediate issue of the advent of its king?

And very closely akin to this is that on which I have to ask your thoughts to-day, the appearance, namely, of distinct predictions of the deep humiliation, as well as of the unbounded glory, of the Redeemer. It has been felt by those, who would resolve religion into naturalism or mysticism, that this is a difficulty which must be got over, if possible; and so they have tried to prove that no Messianic prophecy speaks of the Messiah's sufferings. Prophecies of Messiah are not of suffering, and prophecies of suffering are not of Messiah. In this, of course, rationalist interpreters are aided by the interpretation of modern Jews. And yet even modern Jews bear witness, an unwilling witness, to the fact, that their sacred Scriptures speak of a suffering, as well as of a triumphant Messiah. Their well-known figment of a Messiah, son of Joseph, who was to suffer and die, to precede the Messiah, son of David, who was to triumph and reign, is the clearest possible confession, that there existed predictions in their prophets, and traditions among their people, of a suffering Messiah. Such a figment is unknown to their earliest writers; and it was no

doubt invented, when Christians of old pressed the application of prophecies like my text to Jesus, who was crucified at Jerusalem, and who was believed to reign in heaven. It is at all events an emphatic protest against the rationalist argument, that there is *no* Messianic prediction of suffering and death.

As Christians, who believe that the New Testament rightly interprets the Old, we can all of us remember that the Mosaic Law is interpenetrated from end to end with types of the death of Christ. Accordingly, John the Baptist pointed to Him as "the Lamb of God;" and the Apostles with one mouth proclaim Him as "Christ our Passover," as the "Lamb without spot or blemish," as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Those Psalms, believed by the Jews to be prophetic of Messiah, abound with language which expresses suffering and betrayal and desolation and disgrace. The prophet Zechariah is, according to all ancient Jewish comment, full of Messiah. Over and over again is the name MESSIAH introduced in the most ancient Targum of Jonathan on that prophet. In the ninth chapter, "Behold, Thy King cometh unto thee poor, and riding upon an ass," all their ancient interpreters refer the prophecy to Messiah; and it is plain that some of them understood it to foretell a state of humility; for in the Talmud we read, "If the Israelites are good, then will He come in the clouds of heaven; if they be not good, then riding on

an ass[1]." In the words of the 12th chapter, ver. 10, "They shall look on me whom they have pierced," the Jewish commentators have acknowledged that the death of Messiah was foretold, but then they ascribed it to Messiah Ben Joseph[2]: and yet an attentive reader of the passage must see, that, if it be a prophecy of Messiah at all, it must be of that Messiah who is called, elsewhere, "the mighty God," the Lord of the temple, the Eternal One; for He who is pierced is Himself the speaker, and the speaker Himself is God.

In the 13th chapter of Zechariah, beginning with "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," a chapter markedly Messianic in its whole extent, we have the words (ver. 7), "Awake, O Sword, against My Shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Here again many modern Jewish interpreters have seen a Messiah, son of Joseph. Others,

[1] *Sanhedrin*, fol. 98, cited by Hengstenb. on Dan. vii.

[2] *Succar.* fol. 52, 1: "Of Messiah Ben Joseph it is written that he should be killed, as it is written, *And they shall look, &c.*" Kimchi: "Our Rabbins of blessed memory interpreted this of Messiah Ben Joseph, who is to be killed in battle." Schœtg. Saadiah says, "That the Person who is to be their King shall fall among the slain, and that they shall lament and bewail his death the same Prophet foretells, 'and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.'" Saadiah, *Eighth Treatise concerning the Last Redemption*, § 6. Translated by Allix, *Two Treatises*, London, 1707, p. 13.

however, have strangely imagined that the Shepherd was not the *King*, but the *people* of Israel. But all careful thought must surely teach us, that *a man* cannot have been a *people*, that God's *Shepherd* must be either a king, a priest, or a prophet, and that one called "the fellow," or "the neighbour," or "the companion," of the Lord of hosts[1], must be exalted far above all common kings, or prophets, or priests. And what follows of the judgment of God upon the people, two-thirds cut off and slain, and one-third refined like silver and purified, vv. 8, 9, is so like the passage in Malachi (iii. 2, &c.), and so like what occurred in Judæa and Jerusalem, when Christ came and was rejected and crucified, that, even if He Himself had not quoted this prophecy of Himself, we could not doubt that it had been written concerning Him.

The ninth chapter of Daniel is that from which most probably the Jews derived their constant use of the very name *Messiah*. The ancient Jews without hesitation cite the prophet Daniel, as predicting the coming of their expected King, and even as marking the time when He should come. But then, in the ninth chapter, where the mark of time is most plain, it is written, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself[2]."

[1] See Hengstenberg in note on this passage; who shews that the word עמית, occurring elsewhere only in the Pentateuch, means always *brother*, or *fellow*, or *near companion and neighbour*, and indicates the closest possible relation between two persons.

[2] Though the Jews generally escape as much as possible from

Though therefore, without question, the passage from which I have chosen my text, is the plainest and most important prophecy of the Messiah's death to be found in the Old Testament, yet it does not stand alone. It throws a clearer light on all the rest; but they also throw a light on it. It is to them almost like the fulfilment to the prediction. They are more obscure; it is more clear and unequivocal. But they at least are many and intelligible enough, to forbid that any one should simply dispose of my text and its context, by saying that there are no Messianic prophecies of suffering and death, and that, as my text is a text of suffering, so it certainly cannot be a prophecy of Messiah. Even the later unbelieving Jews, who have endeavoured to get rid of the force of this passage of Isaiah, have admitted that Zechariah foretold the death of the promised King of Israel; only they have invented a second Messiah, that so they might escape the pressure of the Christian's argument, the argument that "Christ ought to have suffered and to enter into His glory[1]."

the natural inference from this passage, yet there are some indications that its true meaning was formerly known to them, *e. g.* in the Talmud, Cod. Megilla, c. 1, "In Daniel is delivered to us the end of Messiah."

[1] The R. Saadiah gives a full account of the war, which will take place between Armillus (ארמילוס, *i. e.* probably Romulus or the Roman power) and the Jews, in which Messiah, the Son of Joseph, will be slain, and the nation reduced to the greatest misery, after which the prophet Elijah shall come to comfort them, and then the full redemption shall come in. See as above in Allix,

Let us then briefly examine the prophecy, of which my text is a portion. It is to be remarked, that the last twenty-seven chapters, from the beginning of the fortieth chapter to the end of the book, may be considered as more or less one continued prediction, though branching out into various subjects. The burden of this is, indeed, very like the burden of the earlier chapters of the prophecy. Isaiah lived, and wrote, and prophesied, just when the shadows of Assyria and Babylon were darkening the horizon of Israel and Judah. In his earlier chapters he seems specially commissioned to warn of judgments, and to exhort to repentance. Mixed, however, with warning, is continually the assurance that God would not forsake His people; assurance of future restoration to His favour, of future deliverance from their enemies. In the later chapters, as the shadow seems to grow darker, the promise seems to gather brightness. Two great deliverances, two great deliverers, are pointed at throughout.

Two Treatises, pp. 11—16, 46, &c. A full account is given of this tradition of the Jews in Buxtorf's *Synagoga*, cap. *De Venturo Messia*. The figment of a Messiah Ben Joseph appears first in the Talmud, *Massecheth Succa*, fol. 52. 1, cap. 5, חלל. "God says to Messiah Ben David, Ask what thou wilt and I will give it thee; who seeing Messiah Ben Joseph among the slain, asked of God only life." Next it occurs in one of the later Targums, the Targum of the pseudo-Jonathan on Cant. iv. 5: "Two are thy deliverers who will deliver thee, Messiah Bar David and Messiah Bar Ephraim." And so again on ch. vii. 3. See Pearson *On the Creed*, page 83, note.

There was a captivity impending. Assyria had already swallowed up Israel, and Babylon should soon carry away Judah. But it is foretold, that God should call a ravenous bird from the East, a man executing His counsel from a far country (Isai. xlvi. 11); nay, the great restorer himself is described by name (or, it may be, by title[1]), "That saith of *Cyrus*, He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isai. xliv. 28). But the prophet's eye reached still further forward. A return from captivity was but a partial deliverance, and Cyrus but an earthly Saviour. Other and future dangers were anticipated, other and future sins were foreseen, other and greater mercies were in store. And whereas, in one place, he who set Judah free from Babylon is called God's chosen, and God's servant, and God's shepherd; so in another, and another, and another, there is a chosen one, and a shepherd, and a servant of the Lord, of whom that is said, which cannot possibly be said of Cyrus. The prophecies of the two dangers and the two deliverances do indeed here, as they do in the earlier parts of the volume of Isaiah, seem to be inter-

[1] Cyrus, or Koresh, which the Greeks interpret *Sun*, (Kōr is still a Persian name for the Sun), was most likely a title of the king of Persia, like Pharaoh among the Egyptians, and Abimelech among the Philistines. See Hengstenberg, *Christology*, on Isaiah xli. note.

twined; and it may be sometimes hard to disentangle them. But yet the respective characters are for the most part clear, and such as require but little care and diligence to discern them.

Need I remind you, brethren, of the resemblance in this respect between these prophecies of Isaiah and that signal prophecy by our Saviour of the destruction of Jerusalem? In the 24th chapter of St Matthew, the end of the fated city and the end of the world, or of the age, are so blended together in our Lord's prediction, that it is hard at first thought to see how they can be separated. It is, at least, a powerful argument for the genuineness of the prophecy, that there is in it this obscurity. If any one had composed that prophecy after the event; it is manifest that he would not have let it seem as though our Lord had coupled His own personal coming, and His final judgment of all men, with the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jews. The same argument holds of this prophecy of Isaiah. If, as some would persuade us, it must have been written after Cyrus had set Israel free, for else the very name of Cyrus could never have been found in it; what an unskilful forger must he have proved himself, who, when the very event had happened, which he professed to forecast, could not make it clear that Cyrus was not Christ. In this, as in so many of the prophecies, out of the darkness seems to spring up light. Only let me say here, that, whatever may be said concerning Cyrus and what

Isaiah writes of him, this at least will hold. The date of these chapters and their genuineness as Isaiah's, are questions of secondary importance, as relating to Messiah, and their fulfilment in our Lord. Though some will doubt whether they were written before the time of Cyrus, no one ever doubted that they were written before the time of Christ. If then they clearly predicted Christ, they must have come from heaven, and may be confidently cited as the "Oracles of God."

But to proceed. In the forty-second chapter we read, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (ch. xlii. 1, 2, 3). On this passage the Targum of Jonathan has, "Behold My servant, Messiah." The Rabbi David Kimchi writes, "This is the servant Messiah." The Rabbi Abarbanel[1] says of those who interpret it otherwise, "All these interpreters are smitten with blindness."

Let us pass now to the immediate passage from which I take my text. It begins, as I have said, ch. lii. 13, and with the same words, as the forty-second chapter, "Behold, My servant." Here once more the Targum reads, "Behold My servant, Mes-

[1] Cited by Hengstenberg.

siah." The very ancient Jewish tract *Zohar* has, "Concerning Thee, O Messiah, speaks the Scripture, 'Behold, My servant shall deal prudently.'" The Rabbi Aben Ezra writes, "Many have explained these things of Messiah." The Rabbi Abarbanel says, "Jonathan Ben Uzziel explains this of the Messiah to come, which is also the interpretation of the sages of blessed memory. I have seen also an exposition of this prophecy by the Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman, who also interpreted it of the King Messiah[1]."

Here then for at least the beginning of the prophecy we have unmistakeably this: the most ancient Jewish interpretations are clear for Messiah, and the more modern Jewish commentators acknowledge that it had been so. Any one carefully reading the whole passage from lii. 13 to liii. 12, cannot doubt that it is continuous, and that the subject is one and the same. In the first part, however, the servant of God is to be "exalted and extolled, and be very high;" in that which follows He is to be "despised and rejected, oppressed and afflicted." The modern Jews might not wholly deny that the former part would suit Messiah, but the latter naturally shook their prejudices and raised their doubts. There is really no inconsistency; for the very beginning of the prophecy says, that "Many were astonished at Him, because His visage was so marred more than any

[1] Schœtgen: in *h. l.*

man, and His form more than the sons of men" (ch. lii. 14). And again it says, "So shall he sprinkle many nations" (ver. 15); and the word *sprinkle* (נזה) is the term used elsewhere, (and used I believe elsewhere exclusively) of *sprinkling* either men, or vessels of the sanctuary, *with the blood of a sacrificed victim*[1]. All then fits in admirably together—fits in with the sacrificial and suffering predictions of the next chapter; and *we* know how fitly it may point to Jesus, rejected, despised, and scorned and crucified, but sprinkling with His precious Blood the souls even of the Jews that crucified Him, and then the many nations, whom His Gospel and His grace have brought into the obedience of His faith.

Still, I say, and not unnaturally, the modern Jews have tried to escape from the Messianic interpretation of the fifty-third chapter. Very various have been the shifts and expedients both of the Jews and of their followers to explain that chapter otherwise. The Jews, who are mentioned by Origen[2], would have had it to point to the whole Jewish people, as by its sufferings among the Gentiles, bringing over many proselytes to the

[1] So used in Kal. Lev. vi. 20 (E. V. 27). 2 Kings ix. 33. Is. lxiii. 3. In Hiphil. Ex. xxix. 21. Lev. iv. 6, 17; v. 9; xiv. 7. Ipse asperget gentes multas, mundans eas sanguine suo, et in baptismate Dei consecrans servituti. Hieronym. *in loc.*

[2] *Adv. Celsum.* Lib. I. c. 55: ἐφ' οἷς ἔλεγεν ὁ Ἰουδαῖος ταῦτα πεπροφητεῦσθαι ὡς περὶ ἑνὸς τοῦ ὅλου λαοῦ, καὶ γινομένου ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ καὶ πληγέντος, ἵνα πολλοὶ προσήλυτοι γένωνται τῇ προφάσει τοῦ ἐπεσπάρθαι Ἰουδαίους τοῖς πολλοῖς ἔθνεσι.

truth; and a large body of German commentators have followed in their wake. Later again in the ninth century, the Rabbi Saadiah applied the prophecy to Jeremiah[1], and he has been followed by the famous Grotius[2], and in our own time by the Chevalier Bunsen. In the sixteenth century Abarbanel suggested its application to king Josiah. Some have imagined it to point, not to the whole Jewish race, but to the more pious worshippers in that race; others have referred it to the whole prophetic order, not to any particular prophet. So ever truth is one, but error is multiform. Nothing but the weight of learning, by which they have been lately supported, would seem to make these opinions worthy of anxiety or of serious thought. How could it be said of the Israelites, that they had borne the Gentiles' sorrows, had been wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities? How could they be said to have made their souls an offering for sin? When they were afflicted, did they never open their mouths? Was it for the transgression of the heathen, that the Jews were stricken? Rather is it not testimony of a writer of their own, that if the armies of Titus had not destroyed them, they

[1] This was probably suggested by the similarity of the words used by Jeremiah, xi. 19, and which seem to have been cited from Isai. liii. 7.

[2] Grotius acknowledges that in a sublimer sense the prophecy applies to Christ.

had come to such a state of utter abandonment, that the earth must have opened her mouth to swallow them up, or fire have been rained down on them, as on Sodom in times of old[1]?

Or take Jeremiah: how died he for the sins of Israel, and by his sufferings procured their pardon? On the contrary, though he suffered, they went into captivity; and most certainly they received no benefit, if they did not find an aggravation of their punishment, in consequence of the sufferings which they inflicted on him. Was he so patient under persecution? Why! we read of his cursing the day of his birth (Jer. xx. 14), his complaining that God had deceived him (Jer. xx. 7), his denouncing vengeance on his enemies (xx. 12)[2]. We do not hear of his silence "like a sheep dumb before her shearers, and so not opening his mouth" (Is. liii. 7).

Need I go on? Where does Josiah, or Uzziah, or any king of Israel, shew any token of such a character as this traced out by the prophecy? Josiah was indeed a pious prince; but how did he give his life to save his people? On the contrary, Josiah was killed in battle, and that because he would not heed the warnings of God, but went up and fought with Pharaoh-nechoh, who slew him at Megiddo (2 Kings xxiii. 29[3]). How can it be

[1] Joseph. *B. J.* vi. 16.
[2] See Chandler, *Defence*, p. 259.
[3] *Ibid.*

said of any of them, that they should see of the travail of their soul, and see their seed, and prolong their days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in their hands"? (Isai. liii. 10.) Not one of these notes of the prophecy reaches even proximately to any one of them. We must fall back then on an interpretation more ancient than any of them, and surely we shall find the old paths the safe paths.

It is indisputable that, as the earliest Jewish commentators interpreted the latter part of the fifty-second chapter of Messiah, so they interpreted the whole of the fifty-third chapter also. For instance, in the fourth verse it is written: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him *stricken.*" Now the word which we rightly render *stricken*[1] is a word very commonly used of one smitten with the leprosy; and the substantive corresponding to it, "*stroke*[2]," is a familiar term for the *leprosy* itself. And so in this very passage, Aquila, Symmachus, and the Vulgate render it, "stricken with leprosy[3]." But then, with reference to this, we read in the Talmud: "There are who say, that the name of Messiah is the *Leper* of the house of Judah, according as it is written, 'He hath

[1] נְגוּעַ.

[2] נֶגַע.

[3] Symm. and Aquil.: ἐν ἀφῇ, Vulg.: *quasi leprosus.* ἀφὴ proprie tactus, sed pro lepra sumitur ut נגע apud Ebræos. (Drusius ex Procopio.)

borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken (with leprosy)[1].'"

Once more, in the fifth verse we find: "He was wounded for our iniquities;" and in the book *Zohar*, a book which the Jews esteem of the remotest antiquity, we read: "Messiah lifts up his voice and weeps for the sinners. And this is what the Scripture says, *He was wounded* for our transgressions[2]." Even later rabbins have been constrained to admit of this part of the prophecy, as well as of the earlier part in chap. lii., that the Messianic was the old interpretation. The R. Alshech, who lived as late as the sixteenth century in Palestine, writes, "Behold, our doctors of blessed memory conclude with one mouth, and they have received it by tradition, that this is spoken of King Messiah...He beareth the iniquities of the children of Israel[3]."

Surely we can hardly dwell too much on such words, when they come from such unwilling witnesses. The Talmud is the ancient voice of the most unmitigated Judaism. The modern Jews have more and more departed from all belief in the death of their great Messiah. With all their prejudices against a suffering Christ, visible in the New Testament, visible in their own writings, visible in their very actions, can we suppose that they would ever

[1] *Sanhedrin*, fol. 98. 2. See Schœtgen, *ad h. l.*

[2] *Zohar*, Exod. fol. 85, col. 346. Ap. Schœtgen.

[3] Cited by Pearson *On the Creed*, p. 87; by Chandler, *Defence*, p. 160, &c. &c.

have distorted a prophecy of death and disgrace into a prophecy concerning their expected King? Nay! can we suppose that they would ever have admitted such an interpretation, had it not been handed down from the earliest ages, and forced upon them by indisputable proof? The other course is natural enough, the descent easy and plain. We can readily see how they may have left the ancient paths and wandered after pleasanter pastures; and we can see how modern critics may have loved to follow them —unless, indeed, the offence of the Cross has ceased.

Let me but in parenthesis remind you, that, if the earliest Jewish comment was clear, the primitive Christian comment was invariable. The first Christian father quotes the fifty-third of Isaiah at length, as concerning the sufferings of the Saviour; and every Christian father that succeeded him, succeeded to the same belief.

And surely, if we take a general view of the whole passage, and compare it with other parts of Scripture, we cannot but conclude that the most ancient Jewish and the most ancient Christian interpretation is also the most natural. It is unquestionably a forcing of the sense to take what is written of a single man, as though it were intended of a nation or of a body of men. "My servant," whose "visage was marred, who should be taken from prison and from judgment, cut off out of the land of the living, making his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, who made his soul an

offering for sin, who should see his seed, prolong his days, and see the travail of his soul,"—how do all these titles and attributes suit any but an individual? Or again, how can they be interpreted of the disobedient people of Israel? how even of the prophets themselves? or of the holiest men among them all? But let us connect all this with much that goes before, as *e. g.* chap. xlii., where we read of the Lord's servant, on whom He had put His Spirit, who should bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, who should not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; a passage which all ancient Judaism understood of the Messiah. Let us listen to the very words of this prophecy itself, and see if it does not correspond with other Messianic predictions in all the most marked particulars. "My servant shall... be exalted and extolled and be very high" (lii. 13). "He shall sprinkle many nations...Kings shall shut their mouths at Him[1]" (v. 15). "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands" (liii. 10). "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (11). "I will divide Him a spoil with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong" (12). Here, even in the midst of all the

[1] *To shut the mouth*, and *to lay the hand on the mouth*, is a designation of humble and reverent subjection. In presence of a more honourable person one does not venture to speak. See Job xxix. 9. Ps. cvii. 42. Ezek. xvi. 63. Mic. vii. 16. Hengstenberg *in h. l.*

humiliations, are all the very promises concerning extended kingdom and glory and greatness, which ever seem in prophecy to centre in King Messiah, but which are utterly hopeless of interpretation if assigned to Israel, or to the prophets of Israel, or to Isaiah or Jeremiah, or to King Josiah, or to any one of whom we read in the history of the Old Testament or of the whole Jewish race. And so every principle of criticism, and the unmistakeable, but still unwilling witness of the Jews, confirm the teaching of the New Testament, and the belief of the Christian Church for the first fifteen centuries, that this chapter contains a prophecy of a suffering Messiah.

To recur then once more to the principle of my general argument in these sermons. It is this. We have in the Scriptures a collection of professedly predictive prophecies. The most ancient Jews interpreted a large portion of these, as referring to a great expected Deliverer; and they were in earnest expectation of that Deliverer, just when Jesus Christ lived, died, and was buried, and as His followers ever held, rose again from the dead, and went up into glory. Not only the prophecies, but also the interpretation of the prophecies, were plainly prior to the event. This argument is not weakened, but is very greatly strengthened, when we find, that there were some of the prophecies concerning that great Deliverer, which their most ancient traditions still prove to have pointed to Him, but which they have neglected,

and slurred over, and, as far as possible, explained away. This latter class of prediction was that which referred to these very characteristics of Jesus Christ, which excited Jewish prejudice against Him, and led to their rejection of Him. They readily enough acknowledge that promises of greatness and of wide dominion belong to the expected Messiah of Israel. The sayings, which concern suffering and death and burial, they have denied as applicable to Him at all, or else they have invented a second Messiah, that so he may, as it were, fulfil and exhaust and satisfy them; but still their oldest writings, and at times even the confessions of their later rabbis, prove that these sayings also belong to the great Messiah, the Messiah Ben David. So we have the Jews' testimony in our favour, where they differ from us, even as where they accord with us; and the unwilling testimony is the surer of the two. They have been to us the keepers and the witnesses of Holy Writ, aye and of the true sense of Holy Writ, even where they themselves reject that sense. They, as it were, present to us a mass of Messianic prophecy, stamped with the impress of their own consent; and in the midst of it portions which their own witness proves to be Messianic too, but which they have striven to twist and to distort into every shape and form, that they may so escape from the conviction, which, in its true form, it cannot fail to bring. Yea! they themselves fulfilled that which was written, by crucifying the Messiah; and then they strove to root out all

trace of the prophecies which foretold that crucifixion. But those prophecies are imbedded still, not only in the Scriptures of their prophets, but also in the traditional interpretation of their Scriptures by their own unbelieving forefathers.

I have already, more than once, reminded you, that these prophecies, from which the Jewish mind has ever shrunk, are the clearest proofs to us, that our blessed Lord was neither an impostor, nor an enthusiast. No impostor would ever have taken the *unpopular* aspect of supposed predictions, and tried to fulfil them, in order to prove to the *people* that he was the expected Prince. No enthusiast would have been likely to dwell upon, and heat his fancy with, what must be thought out patiently and laboriously, before its existence can be discovered at all.

Perhaps I hardly need remind you, that if these predictions really did exist, both in Scripture and in the most ancient interpretation of Scripture; if, from their minuteness of description, and their ill accordance with vulgar anticipation, they could not have been the mere yearnings of the national spirit for deliverance, or even of the pious heart for pardon; then must they have been a forecasting of the purposes of Heaven, such as cannot be accounted for on any principles of natural wisdom, or on any principles of mere natural religion. Centuries before Christ came, His race, His parentage, His birthplace, His life, His death, His atoning sacrifice, His succeeding kingdom and glory, were sketched in

clearest outline by the prophets of Israel. Nothing can account for certain foreknowledge, short of that infinite wisdom which cannot be deceived, and that infinite power which cannot be thwarted. And so the definite accomplishment of definite prophecy proves, with unfailing certainty, the Divine mission and inspiration of the prophets who uttered it.

And now to speak more especially of the *teaching* of that chapter of Isaiah, on which I have been dwelling to-day: is it possible to believe, that it is a prophecy of Christ, and not to believe in all the fulness and the blessedness of the great doctrine of His Atoning Cross and Passion? Why! if Anselm or Luther, or whosoever else is pointed at as the great advocate of this great truth, had wished to find words, in which most clearly to clothe his thoughts, where could he have found more forcible than those very words, which I have read to you for my text? The prophet does indeed appear in them, not so much a prophet, as an Evangelist[1].

As we cannot but feel that the world's history centres in Christ, so we cannot but feel also that our thoughts of Christ centre in, and gather round, His death. Still there are some who see nothing in that death, but an example of patience and piety, the closing of an heroic life with the proper climax of an heroic death: some, who see farther, an obedience to God's will, for man: some, who acknowledge in it

[1] Non tam propheta dicendus est quam Evangelista. Hieronym. *Præf. in Esaiam.*

a responsive echo to the justice of God's judgment on ungodliness, and a sending up, as from the High-priest of humanity, the voice of confession and repentance for sin. But will any of these theories satisfy and explain the language of the prophet?

I have already observed, that the "sprinkling many nations," literally and obviously means the sprinkling *with sacrificial blood*. In another portion of the prophecy (liii. 10) we read, "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin," literally, "When Thou shalt make His soul to be sin," or perhaps, "When His soul shall make an offering for sin." There are but two senses that can possibly be given to the word here used (אָשָׁם): the one is *sin;* the other is *sin offering*. Let us take which we will, the doctrine is clear. "God," says the Apostle, "made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). If Christ was made our sin, then may we see how our sin was taken away and exhausted by contact with His infinite holiness. If, on the other hand, we render, as the margin of our Bibles renders, "When His soul," i. e. "When He Himself shall make an offering for sin;" we have still the clear and unquestionable reference to the sacrificial ordinances, and the pardon supposed to be conferred when the victim had been slain.

And, whatsoever theory we may devise to explain the deep mystery of Christ's death, and after all theories a deep mystery it must remain, still

the teaching of my text concerning it seems at least thus far evident. Ours was the sin; His was the punishment. His the suffering; ours consequently the blessing. He did not sin, but yet He died. We did sin, but through His death we live. What less can be meant by words like these? "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows..... He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes (or wounds) we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned each one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." What words more intelligible could have been devised as marking transference of guilt and of punishment from us to Him; transference of pardon and acceptance and of the merit of suffering from Him to us? Whether the word *vicarious* comes up to the full significance of all this, I will not say; but I am quite sure that the significance of this comes fully up to the force of the word *vicarious*. My text may teach much more, but it at least teaches this; that the innocent and holy Saviour died for the sins of guilty and unholy men, and that by His sufferings their guilt was pardoned, and by His death their sickness of sin was healed.

And surely nothing short of this is taught us, from the first dawn of prophecy to the last preaching of the Gospel of peace. From the bruising of

the serpent's head, from the offering of the paschal lamb, from the letting go the scapegoat, from the lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, from the prophetic aspirations of David, from the brighter visions of Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, from the first teaching of John the Baptist, from the Lord's own words of warning and of love, from the ordinance of the last blessed Sacrament, from the preaching of Peter and Paul and John, from the mystic pages of the Apocalypse—there comes forth to us the same blessed burden: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

It was a well-known saying of the great reformer of Saxony, that the doctrine of Justification was the *Articulus stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiæ.* To force an exact uniformity of belief on that which may admit of some scholastic subtilty, is perhaps not wholly consistent with piety or with charity. But if "Justification by faith" means, as in its truest sense it does mean, a resting all on the merits and mediation and death of Christ; we may then go further even than Luther went, and say, that it marks not only a standing or a falling Church, but, moreover, a standing or a falling soul. It is just as we believe in Him, that we are safe; as we depart from Him, that we perish. It is only in this faith that we can live: it is indeed only in this faith that we can die.

And, O my brethren, and you specially my younger brethren, I entreat you for your souls' sake

and for your Saviour's sake, to be upon your guard, and that very jealously, against every one, who, on whatever pretext, would rob you of that heritage, which the Bible and the Church has handed down to you. Stop your ears against the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Listen to no semblance of lifeless orthodoxy: look at no glitter of philosophic liberality: but answer to them all in the potent words of Holy Writ: "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" I know that "He was made sin for me, who knew no sin;" I know that "He bare my sins in His own body on the tree;" I know that I and all men "like sheep have gone astray; but the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

And then, my brethren, I will be surety for you, that, when the hopefulness of youth is over, and the hopelessness of old age or of death has come upon you, you shall still find that there is hope in Christ; and that what has been the path of the Cross shall prove to be the path of light[1]; yea! the passage and the passport to that kingdom, of which there was knowledge in part and prophecy in part, but which shall be made perfect for ever in the love of God.

[1] Via crucis, via lucis.

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